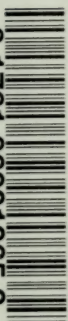


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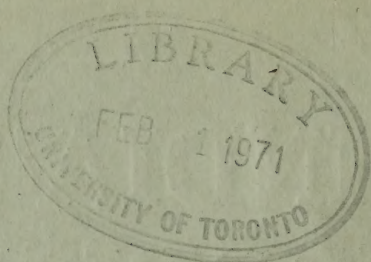
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INDIA'S PROBLEM AND ITS SOLUTION

By
MANABENDRA NATH ROY



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INTRODUCTION

The Indian people finds itself today in a great epoch-making period. The gigantic movement, which is shaking the entire country and is arresting the attention of the world, is not to be looked upon as a simple political phenomenon. It is of much deeper and wider significance than is commonly attributed to it. "The determined struggle of a great nation for political freedom"—this is not an adequate definition of it. This definition covers but one aspect of the great movement, which fundamentally is a social upheaval of tremendous magnitude and historic importance. A people, which has been forced to remain in a state of social stagnation for a long, long time, is at last waking up in order to start on the road of progress. The government, which ruled in the interests of the foreign exploiting class, must be the objective of the first onslaught; because this foreign domination has been the immediate cause of the backwardness of the Indian people. Colonial exploitation by imperialist capital prevented the normal economic development of the country, and a backward state of economic development is not conducive to the growth of the political consciousness of a people. Thus the British rule in India has been responsible for thwarting the free play of the forces of progress that are inherent in every human community. If the very existence of the British government is threatened today, it is not because the people of India has suddenly made up its mind to free itself from foreign thralldom, but because the inexorable forces of progress inherent in the organism of Indian society, —the forces that have been temporarily cramped by the British domination among other agencies, —are asserting themselves. The political aspect of the Indian movement, —the desire for national freedom, the enthusiasm to fight for Swaraj, —therefore, rests on the background of the upheaval of these mighty social forces. The latter is the root-cause of all that is happening in India today; its development will determine the trend and consequences of the political struggle.

This being the case, it is evident that the correct guidance of the political struggle, —the fight for national freedom—is conditional upon a clear and adequate understanding of the social foundation of the movement. Those who constitute the front rank of the Indian nation fighting for political emancipation from foreign domination, must be aware of the nature of the forces that are urging the people on in this great struggle in which they are involved, a struggle which

happens to be against foreign rule in its first stages, but which is destined to bring about much wider and deeper consequences than the termination of the absolute hegemony of imperial capital. The people of India must go forward, not only in political field, but in other aspects of social life as well. The Indian movement, like all other political movements in history, is the expression of the urge for social progress. It is a revolt of the oppressed against all that has kept them in subjugation and stagnation. Therefore it is a mistake to think that the movement for National liberation can be conducted with religious ideology, because it means to rely on one agency of oppression in order to fight the other. Such tactics only confuse the masses and reveal the questionable social affiliation of the leaders. Those who resort consciously to such tactics want to replace national exploitation by class oppression.

What India is rebelling against today has not been the outcome of British domination alone. It is the heritage of the pre-British period as well. Religious superstitions and social bondages, which would have been destroyed by the development of economic forces had not British conquest obstructed the free growth of the latter, are weighing heavily on the masses of our people. We want to overthrow foreign domination in order that the social forces, cramped so far, are allowed free play which will mean the crumbling of our delapidated social structure and the growth of a new one on the ruins of the old. Therefore it is futile, to put it mildly, to inspire our movement with religious beliefs and social conservatism which constituted the basis of the old order which could exist owing to the baneful effect of foreign domination and whose destruction will be the logical consequences of the success of our national movement.

The leadership of the Indian movement, specially during the last three years, has been remarkable for these mistaken tactics. In fact, these tactics of using antiquated ideology to inspire a forward-looking movement, are worse than mistaken. They are questionable. It speaks for the reactionary character of those using them. Instead of helping the masses to develop economic and social consciousness, their ignorance has been relied upon for intensifying the political struggle. That is, instead of putting itself at the head of the spontaneous current of mass-energy, the National Congress has greatly dissipated its leadership by acting contrary to it. Here we are not going into the discussion as to whether the Congress followed this mistaken policy intentionally or not. What we want to point out is, that in consequence of this mistaken tactics of relying on one agency of oppression viz. ignorance, in order to fight the other, the Congress has landed in political bankruptcy, after a spectacular career under the banner of Non-Cooperation. A people cannot be

educated in modern political principles, the application of which is evidently the programme of our National struggle, until and unless they extricate themselves from the bondage of religious superstitions and social prejudices. It is true, and nobody believes in it more than we do, that the people of India will not be able to get rid of these traditional bondages so long as they don't conquer the right to live a free and normal national life. And the first requisite for such a national existence is the end of foreign domination over the economic and political life of the country. But it would be disastrous to forget that our national energy can vanquish the foreign oppression only when it is directed in the channel of progress. Foreign rule has to be overthrown because it has been obstructing our national growth and is detrimental to our economic and social evolution. But if a programme is set up which frankly foregoes all forward movement of the Indian society, it is but logical that the advocates of such a programme are trying to obstruct the progress of the Indian people, and therefore are not capable of leading us in this great historical period of our national life. This was the case with the National Congress ever since it came under the influence of orthodox nationalism. At last it is falling victim to its own contradictions. Still unconscious of their mighty energy as well as of their historic mission, the Indian masses, however, will shape the destinies of our nation. The economic forces that are awaking them out of their age-long stagnation and apathy, will assert themselves, and the leadership of the political movement must conform to their imperious dictates.

It is a mistake to think that the movement is the creation of great personalities. On the contrary, leaders are created by the movement. The greatness of the leader comes in where he can understand the forces behind him and can guide the movement in accordance with the natural trend of those forces. The compromising politics of the Moderates, those venerable fathers of Indian nationalism, brought the Extremists, who under the leadership of Gandhi assumed the title of Non-Cooperators, into power. But the outstanding leaders of the Non-Cooperation movement have so far failed to appreciate the real magnitude of the forces they are called upon to marshal on the arena of national struggle. Believers in the false philosophy which teaches that a few great men can shape the destinies of a nation, these leaders neglected to look deep into the causes which brought about the gigantic popular upheaval. They failed to understand the forces which infused fighting-spirit in the hitherto inert masses. Instead of leading the rebellious masses in accordance with their immediate demands, these leaders sought to impose on them their own will and ideosyncracies. Had they followed the former course, they would have developed the consciousness of the masses of

the people, because the latter would have seen in practice that the political movement for national liberation was closely related with their every-day life. The abstraction of a Golden Age under the aegis of a spiritual Swaraj cannot for any length of time allure the pauperized masses fighting for a full meal or piece of cloth. You cannot lead people into the battle in order to conquer the right of material progress by dinning in their weary ears the virtues of poverty and the philosophy of sacrifice. If poverty and simple living were the highest virtues, then, who deserve more the Kingdom of Heaven than the Indian people?

However, the movement cannot always be either betrayed by the Moderates or misled by the visionary non-cooperators. The masses, who are the backbone of the struggle for national liberation, are learning to find their own way. Bitter experience gained in hard struggles is clarifying their vision. They are no longer utterly unconscious of what they are fighting for. The débacle of the Moderates and the bankruptcy of the philosophy of non-violent Non-Cooperation will be inevitably followed by the shifting of the storm-centre of the political movement. The rebellious masses are no longer going to be utilized for the experiments of this or that socio-political philosophy. Further development of the national struggle will be based more and more consciously on the material needs and demands of those who will take part in it. In short, we are entering a new phase in our struggle for freedom. We will no longer grope in the dark. We will no longer exhort the hungry people to suffer for some visionary Swaraj to be attained by "soul-force" purified in the fire of poverty. Although it will be stupid to talk of premature violence, we are, nevertheless, of the opinion that non-violent revolution is an impossibility. The Indian masses, —the workers organized in Trade Unions, the peasants forming their own fighting organs in the form of the Akali Dal, Kisan Sabhas, Aikka Sabhas etc., call for a realist orientation in our political struggle. To help the formation of this much-needed Realist orientation is the object of the following articles.

CONFUSION IN THE CONGRESS

The arrest of Gandhi at last let loose the various conflicting economic interests and social tendencies that were knit in a superficial unity in the National Congress under his personal influence. A great confusion and the inevitable disintegration are the two most outstanding features of the Indian movement today. It has arrived at the

close of one period, but has not as yet found its way into the next. In order best to understand the present situation it is necessary to make a short review of the past months which directly led up to it.

The magnificent demonstrations and mass strikes during the visit of the Prince of Wales brought into relief two facts, viz., the growing rebellious spirit of the masses, and the unwillingness of the Nationalist leaders, above all Gandhi, to develop or even countenance this spirit which spelt revolution. The Ahmedabad Congress met in an extremely revolutionary period, but it was not governmental repression, which had already been started with the arrest of the President-elect C. R. Das, Lajpat Rai, Ali Brothers and other influential leaders, but the timidity of the leadership which turned it into a tame, impotent show. It was an instance of rank betrayal of the revolutionary forces by the bourgeois leadership. While throughout the length and breadth of the country mass demonstrations were challenging the State's authority to preserve law and order, the Congress harped on the tune of non-violence, and denounced the revolutionary action of the masses as "rowdism" and "forces of evil". Instead of adopting a fighting program, embracing the redress of the immediate grievances of the workers and peasants, thus to involve them more consciously and actively in the struggle, the Congress adopted the so-called "Constructive Program" which was nothing less than a repudiation of all revolutionary preparations. This "Constructive Program" was prefaced by summary abandonment of the tactics of non-cooperation as well as of the powerful slogan of civil disobedience given out but a few weeks before the Congress met at Ahmedabad, which slogan was very enthusiastically responded to by the poor peasantry, because it corresponded to their economic needs. The Congress through the mouth of its elected dictator, Gandhi, declared that civil disobedience could not be declared until there was a "perfect atmosphere of non-violence in the country". This decision of Ahmedabad was corroborated by the Working Committee of the Congress in its session held at Bardoli. The Bardoli Resolution, which suspended all revolutionary activities, included the following clauses which left no doubt whatsoever as to the social affiliation of the Congress leadership. It was resolved at Bardoli:—

- Clause 1. The Working Committee deplores the inhuman conduct of the mob at Chauri Chaura in having brutally murdered constables and wantonly burned police thana (station).
- Clause 2. In view of the violent outbreaks every time mass civil disobedience is inaugurated, indicating that the country is not non-violent enough, the Working Committee of the Congress resolves that mass civil disobedience . . . be suspended, and instructs the local Congress Committees to

advise the cultivators to pay land revenue and other taxes due to the government, and to suspend every other activity of an offensive character.

- Clause 3. The suspension of mass civil disobedience shall be continued until the atmosphere is so non-violent as to insure the non-repetition of atrocities such as at Gorakhpur or of the hooliganism such as at Bombay and Madras on the 17th of November and the 13th of January.
- Clause 5. All volunteer processions and public meetings for the defiance of authority should be stopped
- Clause 6. The Working Committee advises Congress workers and organizations to inform the *ryots* (peasants) that withholding of rent payment to the *Zemindars* (landlords) is contrary to the Congress resolutions and injurious to the best interests of the country.
- Clause 7. The Working Committee assures the *Zemindars* that the Congress movement is in no way intended to attack their legal rights and that even where the *ryots* have grievances, the Committee desires that redress be sought by mutual consultation and arbitration.

The "atrocities" and "hooliganism" referred to in Clause 2 were the uprisings of the poor peasantry against the landlords, and the magnificent mass strikes with which the Prince was greeted.

The following are the outstanding clauses of the so-called "Constructive Program" adopted in place of militant non-cooperation and civil disobedience:—

1. "To enlist 10,000,000 members of the Congress, all to believe in non-violence and truth as indispensable for *Swaraj* (home rule).
2. To popularize the *Charka* (spinning wheel) and *Khaddar* (homespun). All Congress workers should dress in *Khaddar* and learn to spin.
3. To organize National schools; but no picketing of government schools.
4. To uplift the depressed classes.
5. To organize a social service department to promote unity among all classes and races. This department is to render help to all in time of illness or accident."

This is the program with which the Congress wants to lead the movement for national liberation. The consequences of such impotency are inevitable and were not long in making themselves felt in the movement.

A perusal of the Bardoli resolution and the sayings of Gandhi and other leaders do not permit one even to suspect that it might

have been a caution against government provocation. The reasons for the shameful retreat are clearly and blandly stated. The interests of the propertied class must have first consideration: British rule may be "Satanic", but landlordism is sacred.

The absence of any serious demonstration to protest against the arrest of the Ali Brothers revealed the weakness of the hold that the *Khilafat* cry had on the Moslem masses. The visit of the Prince of Wales in such a perilous period was contrived in order to measure the strength of the movement; so also was the policy of Reading in arresting a number of influential leaders of the Congress. The object of the government was realized; the cleavage between the masses and the leadership was revealed. Consequently there was no risk in coming down upon the Congress with a heavy hand of repression. This was done. Even Gandhi, whose post-Ahmedabad activities were more helpful to the government than anything else, was not spared, evidently to vindicate the prestige of Imperialism. The bourgeois character of the Congress had alienated it so much from the masses by the time Gandhi, the idol of the Indian people, was arrested, that such a monstrous action of repression, to commit which even the British government hesitated for months created hardly a ripple of indignant demonstration in the country. The venerated Mahatma was arrested and sent to jail for six years; sentimental speeches were made to pay homage to the martyred saint and patriot; implicit faithfulness was professed to follow the line indicated by him; but what was remarkable, what revealed the real state of the movement was the absence of any spontaneous mass demonstrations like those which had taken place in the country at the least provocation during the last several years. The remnant of the Congress leadership consoled themselves and their rather disconcerted following with the argument that the Mahatma exhorted the people to remain absolutely non-violent on his arrest. But instances are not rare when such exhortations of the Mahatma, even his personal presence, could not stem the tide of mass action. The wave of mass revolt that swept the country following upon the *Hartal* (national strike) called during the Prince's visit as well as in consequence of the slogan of civil disobedience, is still fresh in the memory. All remonstrations, biddings and denunciations of the Mahatma were of no avail.

The removal of Gandhi marked the termination of the period in which the movement could be carried on with a vague, undefined program. It was possible formerly, because the socio-economic consciousness of the various social factors participating in the anti-British movement, had not been yet sufficiently clarified. Therefore all these incompatible, even antagonistic, elements could have the

appearance of being united in a common political struggle. But the most prominent class line was revealed when in the Ahmedabad Congress, Gandhi set his face against the revolutionary action of the masses on one hand, and on the other declared the necessity of making common cause with the Moderates, that is, the political party which consciously advocated the economic and political aggrandizement of the native capitalists and landlords. Since then the reshuffling of forces in the Indian national movement has been going on. The bourgeoisie is so much terrified that it has been of late openly declaring its hostility to the interests of the toiling masses. This attitude naturally does not make for the unity of the political anti-British movement, and is not slow to produce pernicious results.

The various political tendencies inside the Congress organization, tendencies which have been released by the removal of the personality of Gandhi—too much respect for whom tied the hand and sealed the mouth of many a recalcitrant—came into evidence in the various Provincial Conferences held in the latter part of April. All these Conferences (Bengal, Maharashtra, Central Provinces and Berar) with the exception of Punjab, which met during a veritable reign of terror telling particularly heavily upon the Sikh peasants (Akalis) were conspicuous by the presence of two tendencies equally actuated by bourgeois ideals and orientations. The powerful revolutionary forces, expressed through the workers and peasants movements, had very little access to the deliberation and resolutions of these conferences. Strikes, trade unions and peasant revolts were not given any place in the speeches and resolutions, except to denounce them and conjure them up as forces of anarchy threatening the existence of the British Government and the native propertied class alike (Speech of J. M. Sen Gupta as the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Bengal Provincial Conference).

One of the two political tendencies is decidedly bourgeois and either openly or in thinly veiled language advocates a fusion of forces with the Moderates who stand for cooperation, or in other words, compromise with the imperialist overlord. The other is petty bourgeois extremism utterly incapable of understanding the present situation, therefore heading towards an intellectual rut divorced from the pragmatic politics of the bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the dynamics of mass energy on the other.

It is the latter tendency that has raised the voice of protest against Gandhism and attempts to drag the Congress out of the quagmire of metaphysical politics. In Maharashtra, Central Provinces and Berar there has developed a strong Left Wing which demands the revision of the so-called "Constructive Program". In the Con-

ferences this new opposition found itself still in the minority, but succeeded in forcing the appointment of sub-committees in order to investigate the achievements and failures of the Congress as well as to suggest changes in the Congress Program if necessary such as 1. *Swadeshi* (indigenous machine-industry) instead of *Charka* and *Khaddar*; 2. organization of volunteers for physical exercise and social service; 3. to send propagandists to foreign countries; 4. establish technical schools; 5. enter the Councils as Opposition. Some of these sub-committees, specially that of Nagpur (Central Provinces), had made reports recommending total repudiation of the Ahmedabad and Bardoli resolutions; but the new program they suggest is no more revolutionary than the former. If the one was impractical or metaphysical, the other is reformistic, in spite of its wordy extremism, which has absolutely no potentiality on account of lacking a social foundation. Consequently this incipient Left Wing opposition cannot do anything but fumble in the darkness of futile bourgeois extremism.

The purely bourgeois and reactionary policies of the Congress have had a harmful effect upon the working class movement. The second All-India Trade Union Congress met two months before the National Congress assembled at Ahmedabad. As a mass demonstration the Trade Union Congress was of much greater significance than the National Congress. But the relaxation of political enthusiasm was already to be noticed. The great demonstration with which the Trade Union Congress met was more of an economic than political character. The leadership was very questionable. But the National Congress in its great consternation over the countrywide mass upheaval failed or refused to take notice of this new tendency in the labour movement. The only way was to launch an action program which could include the fight for improving the immediate material condition of the working class. But the Ahmedabad Congress started on a path which led farther and farther from the workers and peasants. Thus the leadership of the most important revolutionary social factor was left at the mercy of opportunist politicians, petty bourgeois reformers and government agents.

The Bengal Provincial Trade Union Congress, which met almost simultaneously with the Political Conference of the same Province showed that the trade unions and the Labour movement as a whole had been almost completely divorced from the political movement and had come under the uncontested control of anti-revolutionary leadership. While the process of divorce of the Congress movement from the dynamic forces of revolution was thus revealed, the predominating tendency in the Bengal Provincial as well as four other Provincial gatherings was towards the Right, to join hands with the Moderates. The opposition of Left extremism was futile,

because it was in no way connected with the forces of mass energy. There were small minorities which declared the necessity of going to the masses, but their voice was overwhelmed in the turmoil preparing the ground for a united front of the bourgeoisie, native and foreign.

In spite of this widening gulf between the political movement and the economic struggle of the working class, the latter has not yet completely fallen under anti-revolutionary leadership, because the objective forces of revolution are still in operation. Most of the trade unions federated in the Trade Union Congress are boards of officers rather than working class organizations. These officers are invariably outsiders making capital of the Labour movement, or government agents. They try to dictate how the workers should behave and organize, but are not yet able to curb the spontaneous, although largely unconscious revolt of the toiling masses. In many unions, a spirit of revolt against the "upper class" leaders is growing.

In short, the bourgeoisie has proved itself incapable, even unwilling, to push the Indian movement ahead towards revolution. The petty bourgeois extremism, which expects to gain very little by compromise with the imperialist exploiter, would like to go farther, but is unable to find and employ with resoluteness the suitable tactical weapon. The Congress, which has built up the skeleton of a nationwide organization, is thus left without a revolutionary leadership on the one hand, and is losing the support of the masses on the other. The element that can save the situation is yet very weak, but is not lacking. The development of this factor will prevent the split that is threatening the movement; it will keep the political movement for national liberation based on the revolutionary uprising of the masses, and will be able to push the unwilling bourgeoisie into the anti-imperialist struggle, thus utilizing the little revolutionary significance it possesses.

BEWARE OF PITFALLS

In the Manifesto to the delegates of the Ahmedabad Congress we pointed out the ominous possibilities which were sure to follow if the formulation of a definite programme would be deferred any longer, and if the tactics of our struggle would not be determined in accordance with the material needs and grievances of the awakening masses. It was at a great critical moment in our national history that the Ahmedabad Congress was convened. Profound objective visions—a revolutionary understanding of the forces behind our

national wakening—was necessary to lead the movement out of that crisis. Our leadership not only failed to rise up to the situation but positively sabotaged the movement which stood on the verge of wide-spread revolutionary developments.

After Ahmadabad, the impotency and ridiculousness of whose resolutions were eclipsed by the frankly reactionary, not to say non-revolutionary, programme of Bardoli, the movement entered a stage of confusion and disintegration. The inability to surmount the crisis exposed its innate weakness and encouraged the government to initiate unrestricted repression, which culminated in the arrest and imprisonment of Mr. Gandhi himself. The government anticipated that the magnificent demonstration of mass-energy during the Prince's visit would have its effects on the Ahmedabad Congress. In order to prevent such serious possibilities, it had resorted to terrorism already before the Congress met. But its nervousness was apparent. Those leaders, who could be expected to take a revolutionary stand, were locked up, but this step was taken more by way of measuring the strength of the movement than as the beginning of a determined reign of terror. The manifest anxiety of the government to negotiate, with the object of striking a compromise, bears out this contention. Had the Congress been able to push ahead instead of beating a retreat at the most favourable moment, the government of Reading would think twice before making such a free use of the big stick. In that case, the release of the political prisoners and many other immediate demands of the Congress could have been imposed upon the government, whose precious prestige would thus have received a mortal blow.

But such a step was not to be expected from the Congress under its then leadership. Instead of leading the national army on the road of revolution, it was frightened by its mighty appearance which was denounced first as the "expression of evil", then shamefully betrayed at Bardoli.

Thus was disclosed the cleavage that separated the revolutionary forces and those who pretended to guide them. The way before the government was clear. All the leaders, who could be expected to understand the situation, were quickly arrested and put in jail. The Congress organization was terrorised by wholesale prosecution and persecution, and at last to vindicate the might of the government Mr. Gandhi, who had become the greatest friend that the government could wish at that moment, was made a martyr. Then began the disintegration of the movement and an inevitable reshuffling of the various social elements that constituted it. This disintegration and readjustment are the outstanding features of the movement today.

It is not the arrest of this or that leader which has brought about

this depression; nor is it the government repression which is to be locked upon as the greatest danger to the movement. The grave danger before us is the impending divorce of the masses from the Congress leadership. The Ahmedabad Congress revealed the incapability of our leaders to assume the command of the revolutionary forces; Bardoli and Delhi found them denouncing and running away from them. In the Manifesto to the 36th Congress we told:

"The greatest problem before the Congress is how to enlist the fullhearted support of the people in the national cause; how to make the ignorant masses follow the banner of Swaraj. In order to solve the problem the first thing necessary is to know what is it that ails the masses? What do they want? What is needed for improving the immediate environment of their material existence? Because only by including the redress of their immediate grievances in its programme will the Congress be able to assume the practical leadership of the masses of the people."

The Congress has failed to do this. It has failed to understand the social character of the forces it pretended to lead. It ignored the most vital fact that the revolt of the toiling masses—a revolt that added potentiality to the national movement—was firmly against the unbearable conditions of material life. They could not be kept actively involved in a struggle which was not a fight having for its object immediate amelioration and radical cure of these conditions.

The imminent disintegration of the movement did not remain unnoticed by everybody. Long before this crisis came down upon us on the eve of the Ahmedabad Congress,—in fact ever since 1919 when a fundamentally revolutionary mass upheaval was dominated by an reactionary social philosophy,—we expected this period of disintegration and the consequent depression. We are always aware of the danger ahead, and repeatedly gave warning. This is what we said in the manifesto to the Ahmedabad Congress:

"The oppressed, pauperized, miserable workers and peasants are bound to fight, because there is no hope left for them. The Congress must have the workers and peasants behind it; and it can win their lasting confidence only when it ceases to sacrifice them ostensibly for a higher cause, namely the so-called national interest, but really for the material prosperity of the merchants and manufacturers. If the Congress would lead the revolution, which is shocking India to the very foundation, let it not put faith in mere demonstrations and temporary wild enthusiasm. Let it make the immediate demands of the Trade Unions its own demands; let it make the programme of the Kishan Sabhas its own programme; and the time will soon come when the Congress will not stop before any obstacle; it will be backed by the irresistible strength of the entire population consciously fighting

for their material interests. Failing to do so now, despite its doctrines of soul-force, the Congress will have to give way to another organization which will grow out of the ranks of the common people with the object of fighting for their interests."

The Congress has failed to take this warning. It did not pay heed to these suggestions. Consequently the masses are leaving the Congress. They are organizing Trade Unions and Peasant organizations under the baneful influence of humanitarian reformists, self-seeking leaders and government agents. None of these people can be expected to be friendly to the cause of our national freedom. Their object is to stem the tide of revolution in order to secure the existence of the present political and social system. But they are more clever and realistic than the Congress leaders. They pose as the champion of the interest of the working-class, abandoned by the Congress in their struggle for existence. The ignorant toiling masses, not yet in a position to lead their own struggle, are falling prey to these scheming politicians or masked defenders of imperialism. These improvised "labour leaders" are endeavouring to lead the rebellious masses astray from the straight road of revolution into the channel of reform and compromise. Nevertheless, it is but natural that the exploited workers would rather follow them than the Congress, which never did anything calculated to defend the immediate material interest of the masses.

Let us examine a few outstanding incidents. One of the serious revolutionary outbreaks in recent years has been the peasant movement in the United Provinces. What was the root cause of this movement? Terrible exploitation of the peasantry by the Talukdars. The British government, which is a party to this exploitation, had nevertheless always pretended to stand with the peasants and the latter had been under this illusion. But the movement which led up to the formation of the Kishan Sabhas presented a splendid opportunity to expose the government as well as to develop the revolutionary consciousness of the people. When the Kishan Sabhas came into open conflict with the landowning class, it was no longer possible for the government to maintain its hypocritical role. Police and military were rushed to the scene in order to preserve "law and order", which meant to defend the rights of the Talukdars to exploit the cultivators. This showed whose friend the government was in critical moments: the identity of the interests of the government and the rich propertied class was exposed. Here was a golden opportunity for the Congress to step in, to agitate and organize the rebelling peasantry against the landowners and government. But the Congress failed. It not only did not take up the struggle of the peasantry, but it denounced them as enemies of "national welfare" (Rai Berelli, Gorakhpur, Chauri

Chaura etc.) and subsequently upheld the right of the Talukdars as sacred and inviolable (Bardoli Resolution).

The government, however, did not stop half way. Simultaneously with the terrorism started in order to suppress the acute outburst of an agrarian revolt, it adopted other measures calculated to go to the root of things. First, it forced the Oudh Rent Act upon the reluctant Talukdars and their lackeys in the Legislature. The case was bluntly put to the Talukdars. They were to choose one of the two alternatives viz. to help the government quell the discontent of the peasantry by removing a few of their most flagrant grievances, or to face a widespread revolt threatening the very existence of the landowning class. The government could easily impose its point of view upon the Talukdars, because the second alternative could not be chosen by the latter without the full support of the state forces.

The second step taken by the Government was the organization of the Aman Sabhas, with the object of convincing the agitated peasantry that their grievances could be best redressed by peaceful organization, which the government was ready to patronise. The real motive of the Aman Sabhas is known to all; but the fact that their programme appeals to the struggling peasantry is undeniable. Had the Congress been able to make the programme of the revolutionary Kishan Sabhas its own, instead of preaching to the hungry rebels the injustice of the Sèvres Treaty, the atrocities of Amritsar or the abstraction of a psychological Swaraj fire would be taken out of the government's gun, and such a mighty revolutionary force as the millions and millions of pauperized peasantry would be won over to take a consciously active part in the struggle for national freedom, led by the Congress. But it was not to be so; the social philosophy of the Congress, as well as its political orientation, precluded it from taking such a revolutionary step.

The failure of the Congress to adopt the right attitude towards the strikes and trade unions has been equally remarkable. No attempt at all has been made to help the struggling workers in their fight to improve the miserable condition they live in. When the workers were in a state of spontaneous revolt produced by the unbearable economic conditions, the Congress held up before them the vague formula of Swaraj, which was to be attained by self-purification through self-sacrifice and suffering. Time and again the Congress called upon the workers to declare Hartal, but every serious strike having for its object economic betterment of the working-class by inflicting injury upon the employer, was not only looked upon indifferently, but was condemned and sabotaged by the Congress. Mr. Gandhi declared: "It is dangerous to make political use of the factory workers." This dictum has till today been the guiding principle of the Congress in

its relation to the most revolutionary factor in the Indian movement. Instead of assuming the leadership of the rebellious working-class by including the redress of its immediate demands it remained indifferent, and on many occasions took a positively hostile attitude towards the struggle of the workers. The result of this policy, dictated by grievances in its action programme, the Congress' narrow political outlook and too much respect for the interests of the propertied class, is bearing fruit which will be disastrous unless it is rectified before it is too late.

The overthrow of the foreign domination, which is the avowed object of Indian Nationalism, cannot be realised without the strength and effort of that class of the people which has nothing to lose by the consequences of such an overthrow. Which is this class? The wage-slaves toiling in the factories and on the field. The number of these wage-slaves is legion. This legion alone can win the national independence of India. The propertied class, —the landowners, merchants, manufacturers, those engaged in government employments and liberal professions, —need "law and order", a peaceful state of society, for its development. The overthrow of one political institution will inevitably be followed by a period of disturbance. The government maintained by violence and brute force cannot be overthrown without violence and brute force, the pious desire of the Mahatma and our "spiritual civilization" notwithstanding. Therefore, the aristocrats as well as the thin layer of rich middle-class will always be on the side of the English in the crucial moment. And those who are dependent on these two social elements, will never advocate such measures as threaten the established order. So it is clear the lower middle-class Extremism cannot and will not go very far beyond the limits set by the Moderates. Then, what is going to happen? Will the Indian people always remain under a foreign domination? No. India's national freedom will be attained through the efforts of the workers and pauperised peasantry who will go boldly into the struggle, because they have nothing to risk, but everything to gain. Struggle for national freedom is a revolutionary struggle; therefore it has to be carried on by a class which is socially revolutionary—whose further progress is impossible unless the socio-economic stagnation and obstacles are broken and washed away by a gigantic tide of revolution. This class is the workers in the cities, in the mines, on the plantations, on the railways, as well as the pauperised peasantry. The hopelessly miserable condition they have sunk into cannot be improved under the present system, which is sustained by the British government and which cannot therefore be radically changed without overthrowing the British government as well as revolutionizing the socio-economic philosophy on which such

a political institution rests. Neither the overthrow of the British government, nor the formulation of a new socio-economic philosophy can be expected from an element which is not irreconcilably hostile to the present state of things, not only political, but economic and social as well. When the prospect of the Indian movement is surveyed from this angle of vision, it becomes evident that the freedom and subsequent progress of the Indian nation depend upon the conscious and concerted action of the objectively and inevitably revolutionary masses.

This being the case, the Congress, which embodies the leadership of our national struggle, should come closer to the masses, should try to win their confidence by helping them in their economic fight. But this has not been done. The mass-movement is being led into a reformist channel by the conscious or unconscious agents of the exploiting class, native and foreign. Its revolutionary fervour is going to be choked in the stuffy atmosphere of conservative Trade-Unionism based on the bankrupt theory of "collective bargaining", and on the Peasant Cooperative Movement, calculated to create a class of conservative small farmers as a bulwark against the surging agrarian revolt threatening the very foundation of landownership. If these two tendencies are allowed a free field for a comparatively short space of time, the divorce of the revolutionary mass-movement from the wide political struggle for national freedom, will be complete, and the British domination will be secure for the time being; because deprived of the potentiality drawn from the awakening mass-energy, the Congress will inevitably degenerate into Constitutional Democratic agitation of the Moderates on the one hand, and futile social reformism of the intellectual middle-class on the other.

This is the danger ahead of us, and it is a serious danger for those who really want to see our country free and the nation started on the road to progress.

NEW PROGRAMME

Since it was adopted by the Special Session of the Congress in Calcutta and ratified by the annual gathering at Nagpore as the most suitable method of our struggle, Non-Cooperation has gone through various transformations, ideological as well as tactical. In fact, there are very few who comprehend the tactical importance of Non-Cooperation and who possess the sagacity to wield it as a powerful weapon in the field of practical politics. From the very beginning, Non-Cooperation was looked upon as the programme of our movement,

and not as a method to be applied in a particular stage of the struggle. This misunderstanding has resulted in shrouding a wise political manoeuvre in the halo of metaphysical abstractions.

A glance at the original resolution adopted at the Special Session in Calcutta does not leave us in much doubt regarding its purpose. It was intended to be nothing more nor less than a National Strike. A complete boycott of the government was to be organized. Of course, it must be said that the resolution was very crudely formulated; the methods suggested could not be looked upon as any too well thought out. It appeared that even the author himself did not have a clear enough conception of the consequences involved in the step he was taking. But there cannot be any mistake about the general intention. The movement had grown too big to be any longer restrained by constitutional fetters: new elements of an objectively revolutionary nature had entered and swelled the ranks of the national movement. The Congress could no longer remain a deliberative body, satisfied with futile resolution and petition-mongering, if it was not to forfeit its title to national leadership. It was necessary to enter in the practical fight—to assume the leadership of the masses driven into a state of revolution by steadily developing dynamic causes. How to best execute the new task thrown upon it was the problem the Congress had to solve.

In order to insure victory or at least to keep up the moral of the army, the general must hold out an objective calculated to be alluring to the fighters. Next comes the task of leading the army strategically, to find and apply clever tactics. In a political struggle the first is called a Programme and the second Tactics. Revolutionary developments in the country purged the Congress clean of Moderatism; after a period of confusion and hesitation it could not help but assume the command of the national forces. The entire situation was still too unclear, —the forces to be led were still too heterogeneous, to permit the formulation of a crystallized political programme. The leadership reflected the hopelessly mixed-up and contradictory tendencies struggling for supremacy, in a social organism thrown into a revolutionary confusion. Under such circumstances, the programme of the Congress could not be anything but a vague generalization; so it was inevitable that it should take up the fight thrust upon it, hoisting the banner of Swaraj. And it was to win this Swaraj, about which various classes had differing conceptions and some had none at all, that Non-Cooperation was inaugurated.

Now, if such was the genesis of Non-Cooperation (and nobody will deny it), then it cannot and should not be hide-bound by personal dogmatism. Because in that case it loses its elasticity, and its application to practical politics becomes impossible. Despite the fact that

the confused state of socio-economic forces did not permit the clarification of political ideology, a desire to change the existing condition was felt by all. British rule is immediately responsible for the present miserable condition of the Indian people: therefore it should be ended. The idea of Non-Cooperation was evolved out of the peculiar circumstances which made a frontal attack on the British government for the time being impossible. It would be as foolish as to hurl ourselves against a stone wall. Here comes in the question of strategy and tactics. We must undermine the strength of the enemy and organize our forces, making them ready to be led straight into an open offensive at the earliest possible opportunity. This is the synthesis of Non-Cooperation, if it is to be considered a political weapon. Let us not make out of it a spiritual principle, or a political programme, or abstract pacifism. It is a weapon to be used cleverly and mercilessly in the fight, not to purify our souls, but to cripple the enemy with the express intention of destroying him altogether.

Looking at the question from this point of view, we must consider the present development of the Non-Cooperation movement as a metaphysical degeneration of the original idea which was impregnated with cleverness and virility. Non-Cooperation as a tactics in our political struggle has not failed; it has not been tried. Non-Cooperation of the doctrinarian pacifists, of the tolstoyan passive-resisters has proved futile, as was to be expected. But in the hand of revolutionaries, who will know how to wield it, the method of mass-strikes organized on a nation-wide scale, are sure to develop as powerful onslaughts against the citadel of state-power.

Since the day Non-Cooperation was hedged in by the cult of non-violence, it has lost all its potentialities; its revolutionary possibilities have been sacrificed on the altar of sentimental pacifism, born of the dread that the interests of the respectable upper-class will be equally jeopardised by the systematic development of mass-action. The protagonists of Non-Cooperation switched themselves off into the blind alley of metaphysical politics, as soon as they understood that Non-Cooperation could not bear the desired fruits unless the broad masses were involved consciously in the movement, and that the inevitable consequence of a revolutionary action of the masses threatened everything they held sacred. Hence the great confusion of the last two years; hence the bankruptcy in which the Congress has landed. Besides the inability to formulate a definite programme in accordance with the dictates of the dynamic forces behind the movement, the lack of courage to wield the weapon of Non-Cooperation has been the cause of the pitiable impotency in which our leadership is found submerged to-day.

We must be realists: let us call a spade a spade. We have to fight

an enemy who can rely upon all that modern science can provide. We can be crushed to the dust if we fail to find out first of all an equally unassailable ground. It is necessary to be careful, so that we may not be driven into premature action by provocation; but it is more necessary to see that the spontaneously awakened mass-energy is not dissipated on fantastic schemes which have no connection whatsoever with the realization of our programme. Here again we run against the same difficulty which is at the root of all the confusion in our movement. Nobody knows what is our programme: nobody has explained to us what it is we are fighting for. The period has passed when the undefined slogan of "Swaraj" was adequate. In the last two years, the people have made considerable progress: they have gained much experience and consciousness. Vague promises held out by trusted leaders no longer inspire the people with enthusiasm; the old irresolute and hesitating tactics must be replaced by new ones suitable to the new situation.

Of late we find the Congress leaders feeling the necessity of a new programme. Everybody talks of a "Constructive Programme". But instead of going ahead, our leaders are sinking into impotency in the name of a constructive programme. It is virile and suitable tactics, that are needed most at the present moment. The great problem before our leaders is to find new methods to conduct the powerful movement, which appears to have frightened many of them. But so far, they have failed to solve the problem. In the name of constructive programme they have given up Non-Cooperation, which still is the most suitable method, if we only knew how to apply it. What we need is a revision of the original resolution of Non-Cooperation, with a view to strike out its useless and impractical clauses, and give prominence to those which have not been put into practice, although they are the only ones which will ever make Non-Cooperation an effective weapon in our struggle.

The giving up of practice by a few idealist lawyers will in no way injure the government. The law courts cannot be broken up by the impossible introduction of Arbitration Courts. So long as there will exist property-rights, the law courts will continue to be an inevitable apparatus of the society. The idea of starting National schools while without a national state is visionary; in no way does it injure the government. The Charka is an economic impossibility. None but the poor Indian toilers will be injured by its very problematical temporary success. Government employees cannot be induced to give up their jobs. So, are we to agree then with the wiseacres of the Liberal League that Non-Cooperation has failed? No, we repeat, it has not been tried. The successful application of Non-Cooperation depends upon those elements which are vital to the existence of the present system. It has to be carried into effect by those who can bring the entire life of

the country to a standstill at any moment. It has to be realized by those who produce the vast wealth misappropriated by the British government and capitalists.

Non-Cooperation should cease to be a means of making martyrs of individuals; it should be an offensive weapon in the hand of the toiling masses of the country. The best method to be adopted in this stage of our struggle is not to put the people to sleep by the hum of the Charka, but to organize mass-strikes involving larger and larger numbers of workers. What will be a really constructive step is not to organize Congress Volunteers for picketing liquor shops, but to organize Labour Unions and Peasant Unions, not for passive resistance, but for aggressive mass-action.

But this revolutionary advance on the road of Non-Cooperation cannot be made unless we dare to awaken the class-interest of the toiling masses. Vague promises of a Golden Age will not fascinate the people trained in the school of bitter experience. Therefore the imperative necessity of formulating a programme is forced upon us. Such a programme must include the remedy for the immediate grievances of those who are to lead the fight—on whom depends the success of Non-Cooperation—the workers and peasants of India.

AT THE CROSS-ROADS

The imminent collapse of Gandhism has brought the opposing elements within the Congress Party to a parting of the ways. The right-wing, headed by Pundit Malaviya, is seeking re-union with the Moderates, their spiritual kin, and judging by the latest pronouncements of the Liberal League and kindred organizations, this happy alliance is not far distant. The Left wing, which made up the so-called Extremist element, is floundering about in a bewilderment pitiful to contemplate. The recent Provincial Conferences held in Bengal, Central Provinces, Maharashtra and Punjab expose this division in the Congress ranks very clearly and the resolutions adopted, as well as those which were defeated, show the general tendencies of both camps.

The Moderates, once re-admitted to the Congress ranks, will see the end of Non-cooperation's spectacular career and a general purging of the elements unfit for a party of Constitutionalists upholding a government of law and order. What then will become of the Extremists, who for three years past have headed a movement, whose avowed object was the overturning of the present satanic system and the establishment of Swaraj based upon some form of representative government?

Depleted though their number is by numerous arrests and convictions, there are enough Extremists at large to make their influence felt in the guidance of the Congress at this critical juncture, did they but know clearly what they wanted, and what was needed to save the situation. Their own confusion and lack of political program creates division among their own ranks. They speak of a "constructive program" as opposed to the destructive one whose slogan was "Non-violent Non-cooperation, Boycott and Civil Disobedience", —but they have nothing better to offer than "Swadeshi, the establishment of technical schools and propaganda abroad". It should be here pointed out that both these so-called "programs" are not programs at all, but tactics, i. e. the methods for attaining a given end, which is a program. A real program is what the Congress has never adopted, unless we call Mr. Gandhi's "Swaraj" a program.

If the Congress seeks a constructive program to save itself from imminent disintegration, it should take this vague formula of Swaraj and courageously analyze it, find out what it means and then find ways to attain it. The leaders of the Congress instinctively feel that such an analysis will create sharp divisions in their own ranks, and therefore they avoid it. But for the sake of a superficial unity which is already giving way, they are sacrificing something more essential to their very existence as a fighting body, and this is the support of the masses.

If three years ago, the Congress attained to nation-wide power and significance in the eyes of the British Government, it was because the social class upon which it based itself was no longer a few intellectuals, but the broad masses of the Indian people, who had commenced a revolutionary struggle to improve their material existence. By assuming command of this struggle, the Congress became for the first time a popular assembly, whose demands were backed up by the overpowering force of mass-action. A National strike was called to protest against the Rowlatt Act, and the Indian people obeyed; a Hartal was ordered to protest against the visit of the Prince of Wales, and the response was nation-wide. When any party commands such support, it must be respected, even by an autocratic government.

But today, the Congress no longer commands this support of the broad masses, and the blame lies with itself. It is not because Mr. Gandhi was beloved by the Indian people, who have forsaken the Congress since his arrest. Not at all. Mr. Gandhi meant for the masses a "*Gandhi Raj*" in which the peasants would not have to pay taxes, in which the factory workers would work less and be paid more. The simple Indian worker and peasant, who obeyed the Congress dictates so blindly and unhesitatingly, who struck, were arrested or wounded and killed by the armed police, were fighting for *their* Swaraj, which they had defined for themselves, according to their greatest

needs. But the Swaraj of the Congress leaders was not their Swaraj, as they discovered after painful experience, after innumerable sacrifices, failures, disappointments and disillusionments. The Congress Swaraj ordered them to give up Non-payment of taxes; declared it "dangerous to make political use of the factory-workers".

Today, the Indian workers and peasants are going their own way, and the Congress, robbed of their support, has sunk into impotency. If it would regain its lost power, let it go to the Trade Unions and the peasant Sabhas, listen to the grievances there discussed, and incorporate them into a truly constructive program which will draw the wide masses once more within the folds of the Congress Party, to fight under its command for Swaraj.

WHAT TO DO?

The possession of a clear idea about the ultimate goal is essential for every movement. But to know what we want is not always sufficient for realizing the desired end. Various obstacles stand between us and our goal. Besides the intense and resolute will to arrive at the goal, it is necessary to be able to know how to go there, how to overcome the thousand and one obstacles that separate us from it, how to muster in the struggle all the available forces capable of sweeping away these obstacles. The first part of the work has been accomplished in the last three years. The agitation and propaganda of the Congress have crystallized the Nation's will to freedom. Why it was possible for the Congress to accomplish this task in 1920-21 and not ten or five years earlier, is a question to be answered by the study of our social development. What sort of Swaraj is to be established, —whether it will be Dominion Status, or Home Rule, or complete separation from the British Empire—is a political question to be solved according to the socio-economic necessity of the various classes with diverse and often conflicting interests. The first is a question of social history, whereas the second is the great political issue on which there cannot be a united national opinion. But what is an accomplished fact is that the people of India today are not satisfied with the present state of affairs, not only political, but economic and social as well, and that all the elements of our society are involved in the movement having for its object some change in the existing system. In short, a desire for freedom is kindled in India. The nature of this freedom has not been defined, the extent of this freedom is a disputed question; but the fact remains that the will to freedom is there. And the activities of the Congress during the last three years have contributed immensely to the intensification and crystallization of this national will.

In balancing our accounts we must put this much on the credit side. This much has been accomplished. The next phase of our movement has to be built on this foundation.

The goal fixed and the desire to arrive at it awakened, the next task is to find ways and means to attain it. Swaraj, —be it Dominion Status or Home Rule or Complete Separation, —cannot be realised without a struggle with the British rulers, who will not give in an inch unless forced to do so. Consequently, the immediate task before the Congress is to develop this struggle between the government and the people fired with the will to freedom. To accomplish this task, the formulation of a Programme of Action is essential. This programme should be free from wordy but impotent Extremism, and take the realities of life into consideration.

Let us examine the situation. In spite of the existence of national feeling in every strata of the people, in spite of the fact that the hitherto indifferent and inarticulate masses have of late demonstrated not only the desire but the energy to fight for national liberation, in spite of its spectacular success in sweeping the country with it during the last three years, the Congress today has obviously come to its wit's end. The termination of one phase of its activities has been reached, but preparation for entering upon the next seems to be lacking. To be able to make these preparations with a vision of the nature of the struggle ahead is the immediate task before us. We must reorganize our forces; we must consolidate our ranks to begin a new offensive.

Why are the masses of the more conscious workers and peasants losing enthusiasm for the Congress? We should not deceive ourselves. It is a deplorable fact that the Congress is losing the backing of the mass-movement, which is threatened with the possibility of being diverted into tame reformist channels of an economic nature. All the organized Trade Unions are today controlled by non-political leaders. The peasant movement is drifting on by itself, having no organic connection with the political leadership of the Congress. The high tides of first enthusiasm have begun to subside. The movement has arrived at a stage where sentimental agitation is no longer sufficient to keep the people in a fighting temper. Something concrete has to be put before them. The Moderates, representing the economic and political interest of the rich mercantile and industrial class, are fighting for a definite object and are well acquainted with the methods needed in their struggle. The Congress, in spite of its Extremism as against the Moderatism of the Liberals, cannot be said to be free from the influence of these economic interests. Consequently its policy has been to utilize the mass-energy for its political purposes. Consciously or unconsciously, it followed the policy of arousing the enthusiasm of the masses, without doing anything to awaken simultaneously their

revolutionary consciousness. National Independence remained an undefined programme shrouded in vague abstraction. The day has come when the fruits of such politics must be reaped. If the Congress wants to represent only the interests of the small middle-class in the fight for national freedom, it must lose the support of the masses.

To save the Congress from such an ignominious end, to enable it to lead the struggle of the Indian people further ahead on the road to freedom, the adoption of a fighting programme is indispensable—a programme by which the Congress will assume the leadership of the struggle for existence, in which the masses of the people are involved. If the Congress stands, not for the aggrandisement of a small class, but the liberation of the entire Indian people, it must adopt such a programme and tactics as will bring it closer to the actual struggle undertaken by the Indian people.

While the middle-class has demonstrated nothing but its readiness to compromise, the masses, in spite of their ignorance, in spite of non-revolutionary leadership, have shown the courage to fight. Our Programme of Action should be formulated with the object of intensifying this fight. How can it be done?

National freedom is more than an abstract ideal. We, as well as any other subject people, want national freedom because without it is not possible for us to march on the road of progress. The class of Indian people, which wants Dominion Status, expects to be benefitted by such a political change; therefore it is a political ideal to them. The merchants and manufacturers of India cannot prosper so long as the country remains a monopoly of imperialist capital; therefore they stand for fiscal autonomy and protection for indigenous industries. They will struggle to secure a political status insuring their economic interests. The intellectuals are becoming revolutionary under the pressure of unemployment; therefore they demand Indianization of the Public Services and Complete Self-Government (Home Rule) to be realised within the shortest possible time. Thus, to all these sections of the upper and middle classes of the population, the philosophy of Nationalism is based on some material benefit or other to be acquired as a result of Self-Government, whose character and extent, of course, vary according to the convenience of their respective classes. But what is the material basis of Swaraj, in the name of which the masses of the people have been called upon to follow the lead of the Congress?

Like the awakening of the upper and middle classes, the mass upheaval of the last years has also been brought about by imperious economic laws, which have aroused in the exploited classes the desire to change their present condition. The struggle, into which the workers and peasants of India have thus been driven, corresponds in its initial

stages with the struggle for national freedom. And it is this struggle of theirs that lent the driving force to the movement for national liberation. The middle classes of India are not in a position to carry the struggle for national freedom to a victorious end by themselves. Consequently, the Programme of Action of the Congress which is the leader of the National Movement, cannot leave the material necessities of the working class untouched, and adjust its tactical moves in accordance with the convenience of the thin layer of the propertied and intellectual middle class.

Today all but the rank and file of the national army, which has fought valiantly and is alone capable of leading the fight to a victorious end, have an understanding of the kind of Swaraj they want. But to the rank and file, that is, the workers and peasants, it has never been presented as anything but a sentimental abstraction. Can a people, driven to rebellion by insufferable pangs of hunger, be expected to follow such a lead forever? No. And this fateful negative is to be heard by every one not blinded by class interest or determined to be deceived. The masses are showing unmistakeably their desire for material betterment. What else is the significance of the innumerable strikes and the agrarian revolts spreading over the country like wild-fire? The masses are becoming more and more conscious of the material interests behind the movement in which they became involved spontaneously. It is no longer possible to hold them under the spell of personalities or sentimental agitation. They are heading inevitably towards a bitter fight for the improvement of their immediate material conditions. If the Congress can adjust its politics and programme of national independence in such a way as will recognize this immediate fight of the working-class and poor peasantry as a part and parcel of the bigger struggle it wants to lead, then it will succeed in maintaining its political leadership over the mass-movement. In that case, the immediate task becomes very evident. There will be no room for vacillation and groping in the dark; nor will there be any necessity of throwing longing glances towards the Moderates.

To organize the industrial workers into class-conscious revolutionary Unions which will first fight for higher wages, shorter hours, better living conditions etc. and enforce these demands by means of mass strikes to be converted into political strikes at every possible opportunity; to capture the leadership of the spontaneous peasant revolts by boldly giving out the revolutionary slogan of Non-payment of Rents and Taxes; to organize mass resistance against the projected increase of indirect taxation; to proclaim the unconditional abolition of landlordism under Swaraj; such are the principal points of the Fighting Programme which is necessary. The adoption of such a programme will infuse new vigour in the movement. By such an act, its social

foundation will be shifted from the quick-sands of wordy Extremism onto the bed-rock of the pauperized militant masses, whose present miserable plight cannot be affected in the least by a superficial re-adjustment of the economic and political structure and whose salvation, therefore, lies through a Revolution which incidentally will bring National Freedom to India.

THE NEW OPPOSITION

Steady development of the social forces behind the movement is clarifying the political orientation of our leadership. The slogan and methods of fight, evolved out of the confused upheaval two years ago, do not fit into the present situation. The necessity of defining their point of view—of demonstrating if they are capable of leading the movement further ahead, —is being forced upon our leaders. The Bengal, Central Provinces, Berar and Maharashtra Provincial Conferences have disclosed the crystallization of a strong opposition to the doctrinarian pacifism and metaphysical abstraction into which the Congress has been running headlong since the apostles of "spiritual civilization" became frightened by the magnificent display of mass-energy during the Prince's visit. Central Provinces and Maharashtra, led by Dr. Moonji and Mr. Baburao Gokhale respectively, have initiated the agitation for putting the Congress activities more on the basis of practical politics and material interests of the people. The amendments, suggested by the sub-committees appointed by these two Provincial Conferences, if accepted, will not save the Congress from the present crisis. The Ahmedabad, Bardoli and Delhi resolutions not only stand in need of radical revision, but they have to be entirely repudiated as the irresponsible actions of persons for whom the movement has grown too big and awe-inspiring.

"The aim of the Congress is thoroughly worldly and for worldly happiness, and has to be attained by worldly means which should be easily understandable and practicable". This declaration of the Nagpur sub-committee challenges the current philosophical conception of Indian nationalism. It is a good start made not too early, —in fact rather too late; the Ahmedabad Congress was the most opportune moment. The modifications suggested, however, do not come up to the expectation. Their introduction will bring the Congress away from Tolstoyian pacifism, but closer to the Liberal League. The report of the sub-committee rightly criticises the Khaddar propaganda and points out the impracticability of boycotting the schools and courts. But its recommendations on these points of the present programme

are in no way revolutionary. The task before the Congress, nevertheless, is to lead a mass movement essentially revolutionary and growing more and more so every day. Since the fateful day of Bardoli, when militant Non-Cooperation was abandoned and the spontaneous beginning of Mass Civil Disobedience was repudiated, the Congress has been advocating a line of tactics not only impractical, but non-revolutionary. This reprehensible tendency has of late degenerated into a pseudo-spiritual cult, which makes a religion out of politics. Its non-revolutionary character has been evolving an anti-revolutionary, even reactionary spirit. This is the real danger which the movement faces to-day; and we must say that the amendments of the Maharashtra and C. P. opposition fail to take it into account. If the so-called "Constructive Programme" of Bardoli is futile and imbecile, that of the new Opposition cannot be considered to be anything more than practical reformism. It touches the moot question of Civil Disobedience very timidly. Neither Charka, nor Khaddar, nor the cult of non-violence will bring Swaraj to India; but may it not also be asked how are we going to be free by starting a few polytechnical schools, or by wearing Bombay mill cloth instead of Khaddar, or by sending a number of our brilliant graduates to do propaganda in the foreign countries? No, the latter scheme is also as futile as the former is impossible. Both of them shirk the fight, because the former is terrified by the forces behind the national awakening, whereas the latter does not take them into calculation, still thinking the national movement to be an affair of the small class of pauperised intellectuals.

In the medley of retreat, ordered from Bardoli and turned into a disorderly rout under the command of those, socially belonging to the enemy camp, it is reassuring to hear a courageous call for a halt. But this halt should be immediately followed by warlike preparations, otherwise the consternation in the ranks will not subside. Those who desire to assume the command of our national forces, shamefully abandoned in the very front lines of the battle, must measure carefully the potential strength of these forces in order to lead them farther ahead. The Indian nation, —not the Indian nation of "educated" respectable middle-class, but of the peasant and working masses, —has begun the struggle for *material* progress. This struggle will go on under all circumstances, —in spite of the strong doses of religious other-worldliness, administered by those who really constitute the bulwark of reaction, in order to prevent this rising tide of rebellion. Any programme, any tactics that does not fit into the sweeping nature of this great revolt is bound to be either reactionary or futile. The tendency, which will attempt to stem this mighty tide, is reactionary and can be expected to be found sooner or later in its

proper place by the side of the enemy. The leadership, which makes a cult of non-violence, which sacrifices the material welfare of a struggling people on the altar of a spiritual existence, and which went bankrupt at the sight of the mass-action in Bombay, Guntur and Chauri-Chaura, —is socially hostile to the forces that are the very life of the Indian movement and that are alone capable of conquering our national independence. Therefore this leadership is reactionary; to-day we find it fraternising with the Moderates, who in their turn will ingratiate them into the respectable company of the British rulers—the traditional defenders of peace and order, the bulwark of security of life and property, the galant patrons of our heritage of "spiritual civilization" (so long as we stick to the Mayabad.) Futile will be proved those attempts which depend on the statics and not dynamics of our forces, which ignore the fountain-head of revolutionary energy in the scheme of "practical politics". The New Opposition belongs to this class, and will end in a blind alley if it too fails to liberate itself from the traditions of respectable middle-class psychology.

If the Congress abandons its metaphysical programme only to launch upon a career of technical efficiency, it will surely find itself divorced from the revolutionary forces, despite the high practicality of its new politics. Thus the movement will be split in two parts, viz. one of the middle-class with a middle-class psychology and the other a struggle for improving the economic condition of the workers and peasants. Divorced from the masses, the former will remain impotent and amenable to compromise with the government whenever some concessions calculated to further the interests of the middle-class will be granted. Whereas, on the other hand, disillusioned of the prospect of gaining Swaraj, the masses will temporarily withdraw from the political movement in order to devote themselves to a purely economic struggle under the leadership of conservative and reformist leaders. Such an eventuality spells a depression in the movement and the consequent delay in attaining national liberation.

This eventuality has to be avoided. This task devolves upon the New Opposition, which must know the forces that are pushing them forward. The revolutionary energy of the toiling masses, which will overthrow the foreign domination as the first step towards freedom, is making itself felt in the Congress ranks through the medium of those who have challenged the fanatic pacifism of the spiritual reactionaries and have declared material progress to be the goal of our national struggle. To develop the consciousness of the masses by identifying the national interests with the immediate interests of the workers and peasants, is the task to be undertaken. Not in the polytechnical school, nor in the volunteer corps, com-

posed mainly of students, but in the midst of strikes, trade-unions, peasant revolts and the agrarian movement are being and will be marshalled the forces of national liberation. The Congress has two alternatives before it; either to assume the leadership of these forces by showing the capacity to lead them cautiously, strategically but unwaveringly forward in the struggle, or to abdicate the national leadership in order to go over eventually to the side of the enemy.

WRECKING THE COUNCILS

The question of entering the Reformed councils has been a bone of contention in the Non-Cooperation camp. It is certain that a great battle will be fought at Gaya over the proposition of abandoning the programme of Triple Boycott, particularly the boycott of the Councils.

This projected move is very debatable and much consideration is necessary before a definite decision is taken on the matter. Therefore it is but natural that there is so much divergence of opinion expressed. But is it discussed in the right way? Are all the innumerable issues involved in it seriously taken into consideration? We cannot give an affirmative answer. If we take the utterances of Mr. Patel and Hardyal Nag as the typical official point of view, which refuses to admit such a change in the Congress programme, we cannot say that these gentlemen stand on rational ground. According to them, and it appears that they represent a large volume of orthodox Congress opinion, the question is to be decided on ethical grounds. To them it is a question of loyalty to the leader. Hardyal Nag declared that by making the suggestion of entering the Councils, the president of the Bengal Provincial Conference heaped shame upon Bengal. Mr. Patel wondered how could we think of such a step when 20,000 patriots were in jail. But such sentimental arguments cannot curb a political tendency growing out of the socio-economic heterogeneity and the present decomposition of the Congress organization.

It is a known fact that in the Nagpore Congress there existed a strong faction led by C. R. Das among others, opposed to the boycott of the Reformed Councils. Evidently this faction, which kept quiet at that time for the sake of unity, either thought that the Reformed Councils could be of some use, or did not believe that the proposed boycott of the Councils would paralyse the government. These two points of view might not have been expressed at that moment, but they did exist and constituted the silent opposition. There is, however,

a greater divergence between these two bodies of opinion than that between them and the Official Non-cooperators. The first, that is, those who thought that some benefit could be secured through the Reformed Councils, were against the boycott because they considered it to be a mistaken step. Whereas the second, that is, those who did not believe that the boycott of Councils would paralyse the government, were opposed to the boycott resolution because they thought it was useless, it would not succeed. Experience has proved the latter to be right, because they were actuated by a revolutionary tendency, although in many cases still unconscious and undeveloped. The boycott of the Reformed Councils by the Congress has not in any way injured the government. On the contrary it has provided it with Councils exactly after its desire. The boycott left the field clear for the rank reactionaries and senile liberals, who flocked to the aid of the government in its efforts to make "the first experiments of democracy" successful. In so far as Imperialism is concerned, the Reforms have been successful. What was the motive of introducing these "reforms"? It was to split the Indian national struggle—, to buy the services of the upper and a section of the middle classes. This object has been realised in spite of the boycott of Councils by the Congress. The government has not been paralysed; on the contrary, the Congress is threatened to be wrecked on this rock.

Those non-cooperators, who would not include the boycott of the Councils in their programme, were cleverer politicians. They had no fundamental dislike for the Councils, —they even found in them the means of accomplishing what they wanted, viz. the political and economic advancement of the middle and intellectual classes. But their political sagacity, not clouded by sentimental effusions and metaphysical abstractions, recognised the necessity of entering the Councils with a force behind them. They wanted to enter the Councils not as willing tools of the government, as the present sycophants are, but as the representatives of the rebellious people. Thus they advocated the rest of the Non-cooperation clauses calculated to develop the agitation already growing spontaneously among the masses. It is this element which has of late given up its former silent opposition, and has put forward persistently the necessity of entering the Councils. They think that the time has come when members of the Congress Party will be in a position to constitute a powerful opposition inside the Councils. Or in other words, relying on the support of the mass-energy expressed through the movement, they expect to force upon the government the necessity of granting to the "politically minded middle-class" something more substantial than the sham reforms of the present. Once launched upon, there will be no

end to this course. In reality it means nothing less than eventual abandonment of the principle of Non-cooperation. No wonder that the doctrinarian and metaphysical non-cooperators will take alarm at this projected move, which will end in purging the Congress of all reactionary religious leadership and delivering it over to the control of those whose political philosophy hardly differs from that of the Constitutional Democrats of the Liberal League. Or in other words, participation in the Councils with the object of making use of them will end in finding a *modus vivendi* between the Congress Party and the "satanic government". This is, nevertheless, the inevitable consequence of a movement based upon the interests of the middle class, and the latest developments have demonstrated unmistakably what the Congress means by Swaraj. It is Self-government or Dominion Status, the same Kingdom of heaven coveted by the Moderates, the same readjustment that will permit the native middle-class a considerable share in the political administration and economic exploitation of the country.

After three years of noisy fermentation, which by the way has had its historical importance, the Congress is settling down to the same definite political principle. The various elements that went into its none too well-knit make up, are trying to mark out diverse and even conflicting courses according to their economic interests and social affiliation. The most politically developed, socially conscious and numerically strong faction is very likely to impose upon the entire Congress Party the course suitable to itself. The controversy over the participation in the Councils is but one expression of the struggle between reaction and progress which has made the present constitution of the Congress Party untenable. The orthodox Non-cooperators, the transcendental Swarajists, are the standard-bearers of reaction in the Congress and as such are bound to be overthrown by the "politically minded middle-class intellectuals" who stand for progress, although the progress they want does not need separation from the imperial connection. Therefore, in this tussle for supremacy inside the Congress, no revolutionary factor is taking active part, notwithstanding the fact that it was with the backing of the awakening mass-energy that the reactionaries held sway for three years, and it is again with the help of the same revolutionary force that the progressive middle-class is on the eve of coming to power. The victory of the progressive tendency will certainly be a step forward, because it will dissipate the reactionary spell holding the masses in ignorance. But this victory at the same time will signify the prelude to another compromise with the imperial overlords, because "His Majesty's loyal Opposition" in the Reformed Councils is not very far from the officialdom of the "autonomous provinces". And what more than "fiscal autonomy" or

"provincial autonomy" or some such other concessions calculated to further the interests of the native capitalist class and find more employment for the intellectuals, can be expected through the struggle carried on within the limited scope of the Reformed Councils?

So much as to those who believe in "constructive activities" in the Councils. Their programme is evident. They want to utilise all the avenues available for getting into a close struggle with the government and wrestle as much as possible from its unwilling hands. In order to realise this programme, they want to have the "united nation" organized inside the Congress, "their political party". It is a well-known middle-class tactics, whose success coincides with the betrayal of the masses. History is full of such betrayals, from the infamous "Manchester Massacres or Peterloo", as it is commonly known, to the Collins Rule in Ireland, and the Adly affair in Egypt. An issue, which is inevitably bound to lead up to some such betrayal in the history of India's struggle for national liberation, is of little concern to the revolutionaries, to those upon whom devolves the historic task of overthrowing the foreign domination, in order that the people of India can be started on the road to progress, material and spiritual. So there must be a revolutionary angle from which this question of entry into the Councils can be approached. If it is to continue leading the struggle for revolutionary nationalism, the Congress must keep clear of the path of Constitutional Democracy of the "politically minded middle-class" on the one hand, and give up futile and impossible methods based on doctrinarism and ignorance of the social forces on the other. To stake the prestige of the movement on the successful boycott of the Reformed Councils was a mistake. The Congress succeeded in boycotting the Councils; but, it was not the boycott in itself that was aimed at. The object was to paralyse the government. The tactics adopted have failed to realise the goal. To stick doggedly to a method which has proved futile will be to add to the mistake already committed. This cannot be permitted under any pretext. The Non-cooperation programme has to be carried through. If one method has failed, a new one has to be conceived and more militant measures should be resorted to. We want to paralyse the government; we want to show that no government can forever rule a people determined to be free. It is necessary to attack the enemy wherever there is an opening. We should approach the enemy not to fraternize, negotiate, compromise, but to deal him a square blow at every possible moment. How can our Cooperation be vital to the existence or even to the prestige of the government, if the necessity for such cooperation does not exist? To boycott the councils does not injure the government. It is necessary to carry the fight into the enemy's camp. The councils, which add new justification to the

imperial domination, should *as a body* non-cooperate with the government. And this cannot be done so long as the Councils are a monopoly of the representatives of the rich capitalist class in league with the government. Nor will it be done when the "politically minded" middle-class intellectuals and office hunters will form an Opposition in the name of the "united people" expressing their will through the Congress. It can only be realised when the Councils are captured entirely by revolutionary Non-cooperators, who will enter the Councils, not with the hope of getting as much benefit as possible out of them, but to use them as a weapon of resolute warfare. The Councils with an overwhelming non-cooperating majority will refuse to be an ante-chamber affair of the imperial overlords, and as the elected representative of the people, will declare itself the supreme authority of the land. This will be a revolutionary act, and participation in the Councils with this object in view, will be revolutionary tactics. But a revolutionary party is required to carry out this tactics with determination.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

The Enquiry Committee's report is not yet published; neither is the character of the evidence recorded by it known publicly. The procedure of closed-door sessions has from the beginning veiled the Committee in mystery. It is interesting to see those stalwart opponents of bureaucratic methods discussing behind closed doors a question of such vital importance to the future of the movement. Those, who challenge the right of the foreigner to decide what is good and what is bad for the country, find it quite logical that half a dozen men should pass judgment as to the capability or otherwise of the entire people to advance on a revolutionary path. Well, this is a constitutional question, and we are more concerned with larger aspects of the matter. We do not care to challenge or defend the ethical or juridical authority of the Committee, because a revolutionary movement cannot be guided according to rigid legal and moral concepts; besides, who is to set up the standard for such concepts? But what we are interested in is, whether the Committee reflects the situation in the country?

Though the joint and official finding of the Committee is not yet available, it is not difficult to surmise what will be the general trend of it from the opinions expressed now and then by its individual members. It is quite evident from such expressions of individual opinion that the Committee made up its mind before beginning the

enquiry. It is not approaching the question with what is called an open mind. Even the most exhaustive answer to the questionnaire will not in any way indicate if the people are ready for Civil Disobedience or not. The standard set up by the Committees seems to be the completion of the Bardoli-Delhi Programme. This is enough to infer that the Committee will surely decide against the immediate inauguration of Civil Disobedience. The evidence collected by whichever method—, in camera or by open hearing—, will not prove that the so-called Constructive Programme has been realised even partially, because under the present circumstances, most of the clauses of the programme are not realizable. Therefore, it is but logical to expect that a measure, whose adoption is conditional upon the realization of something unrealizable, will never be adopted. Or in other words, our leaders will postpone the inauguration of Civil Disobedience on the ground that the country is not yet ready for such a step. And in so doing they will throw the blame upon the people.

Leaving for a moment the question of the inauguration of Civil Disobedience, let us examine the programme whose realization is supposed to determine the fitness of the people. Because not only the Enquiry Committee, but the entire official leadership of the Congress seem to insist upon the completion of the Constructive Programme before considering any other means of fight. Hakim Ajmal Khan declared at Allahabad: "I have been told that the Bardoli resolution did not satisfy the country's demand. It is a pity that the people would not take to activities which did not provide them with excitement. The Constructive Programme of the Congress was the very foundation of Swaraj, and if they are not prepared to carry it out, that only showed that they were not ready for the higher duty which would devolve upon them." To those leaders, whose opinion is expressed by the Hakimji, the movement has become very simplified. It is but a bundle of formulae to be recited with religious fervour to hush all desquieting clamour of opposition, and which should be held before the people to carry out under all circumstances. None will question the political sagacity of feeling the sentiment and spirit of the people before leading them farther in the struggle. The gravity involved in the tactics of Civil Disobedience is of such an enormous nature that it should not be launched with a light heart. The people must be led step by step towards mass Civil Disobedience, which is nothing less than open revolt. But this preparatory work is not done by simply brandishing the so-called Constructive Programme. If the people have lost all enthusiasm for it, then something must be wrong with it, —then it has failed to be adequate for the purpose for which it is supposed to have been adopted. Consequently, if the Congress is willing to lead the people towards the stage of revolutionary

enthusiasm needed for the inauguration of Civil Disobedience, new methods must be discovered and applied during the preparatory period. But by sticking to the worn-out formula of the Constructive Programme, which, according to their own confession has ceased to appeal to the imagination of the people, our leaders simply betray their unwillingness to adopt any measure that may tend towards revolutionary development.

Now let us see if the people can be blamed for having lost enthusiasm for the Constructive Programme, and if there is any possibility of reviving the subsiding popular enthusiasm by the activities within the province of the Bardoli resolution.

The principal points in the Constructive Programme are: the Charka, Khaddar, Removal of Untouchability and to fight the Drink habit. The first two are economic questions and as such should be dealt with purely from the economic point of view. No sentimental or ethical issue should be made out of them, because by such confusion the success of the programme is in no way helped. The third is a social problem with a deep economic foundation. The fourth is also a social problem, but is approached by our leaders purely from the ethical angle.

In spite of its failure, the Charka-Khaddar slogan is still the one on which the Congress insists upon staking its future. It is what is called the burning question of the day. It has two aspects; one constructive, the other destructive. One purely economical, the other political, agitational. It is with the latter that we are concerned here. We are leaving out of consideration its constructive, that is purely economic aspect, although the possibility of its success in the political aspect fundamentally depends upon its economic soundness. Now, if the inauguration of Civil Disobedience should be made conditional upon the realization of the Charka-Khaddar Programme, it follows that before Civil Disobedience is declared, the Charka must be introduced into every house, at least in the majority of families, and that Khaddar must be worn by all. Is the creation of such a condition possible? We have to approach the question from the side of possibility and not desirability. We may like everybody to ply the Charka and wear Khaddar; but if these acts on the part of the people are to be looked upon as preliminaries to something else, it is necessary to examine whether there is any possibility of success in this respect: if the people can (not will) do what we ask them to do.

All reports go to show that the price of Khaddar is higher than that of the mill-made cloth. Of course, this was evident to everybody acquainted with the rudimentary principles of production. It was not necessary to wait and see the results. To-day we are faced with the prosaic and material fact that one has to pay four to six rupees to

buy a piece of Khaddar. Taking into consideration the average income of the Indian worker and peasant we know that they can spend a certain amount and no more on clothing a year. This is the irreducible minimum; because the income is so paltry as not to cover the expenses of two meals a day. These are facts all too well known to every nationalist leader. Now an average peasant can spend, say ten rupees a year on clothes. If this amount could buy Khaddar there would be a chance of inducing him to use it in spite of other disadvantages. But if, as is the case, it does not buy the minimum quantity of clothing he needs, he cannot be expected to go naked rather than wear the "unholy" foreign stuff. The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal failed on account of this economic impossibility, and not for any lack of enthusiasm or spirit of sacrifice. Sentiment can keep a movement going for a certain length of time, but it cannot last forever unless fed with more substantial factors.

The fate of the Charka has not been any better, and on account of the same reason, viz. the economic fallacy involved in it. Since its high price is daily restricting the sale of Khaddar, the manufacture of the latter has to be given up and the market for home-spun yarn becomes daily reduced. So the fate of the Charka is doomed in spite of all the virtues ascribed to it by our leaders. So long as an overwhelmingly large majority of the population lives in the village, and so long as machine production is not extensively introduced in the country, there is room for craft industries. But a propaganda for the revival of cottage industry does not prepare the people for a purely political movement.

The last two items in the Constructive Programme have no more chance of success, since the Congress approaches the problems from a wrong angle. Untouchability is a heritage of the old society and will only disappear with the triumph of the new. No amount of ethical propagandizing will remove this prejudice any earlier than it is swept away by the development of higher means of production. Neither will the drink-habit be cured by the sermons of those who are not ready to strike at the very root of the causes that make the poor wage-slave take to drink, driven by desperation. Four or eight annas a day do not save his family from starvation, but buy enough of liquor to drown his sorrows in unconsciousness. The government knows it well; therefore makes ample provision so that the worker can find this poison near at hand. You can picket the liquor shops of the big cities. But who is going to counteract the influence of the chain of breweries in the interior of Behar, Central Provinces, Assam, and other parts? On the long way from his work back to home, the care-worn father of the family passes no less than half a dozen of these grog shops where he can buy a bottle of liquor for a few annas.

The above must be sufficient to prove that the present Constructive Programme is not possible of completion. Those who still insist upon it are not anxious to develop the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people. They are opposed to any such eventuality. But those who sincerely want to see our movement progress, should find other means of creating a situation fit for Civil Disobedience. These means should be such as to appeal to the immediate interests of the masses of the people. They should remember the enthusiasm with which the slogan of non-payment of taxes was welcomed by the poor peasantry of the United Provinces, in Bengal and North Madras. The organization of several thousand volunteers in the towns, volunteers ready to go to jail by violating the technicalities of law, should not be looked upon as the pre-requisite for the inauguration of Civil Disobedience. Because Civil Disobedience will not be any more successful than the other clauses of Non-Cooperation, unless it is declared by the masses. Therefore our preparatory work consists of demonstrating practically and not by sentimental humanitarian cant, that the Congress is the leader of the worker and peasant population. We must approach them not with orders for impossible tasks, but with practical methods of fight calculated to improve their miserable existence. Work along this line will increase the enthusiasm of the masses and will mobilize them under the banner of the Congress. Then will come the time when Civil Disobedience can be inaugurated with all the possibilities of a revolutionary development.

LABOUR AND THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Anybody fairly acquainted with the situation in India must subscribe to the view that her future depends, if not altogether, at least greatly on the workers and peasants. We have shown repeatedly how the plausible programme of paralysing the government by means of Non-cooperation cannot be realised without the active support of the working masses. We have also pointed out how and where the Congress has failed to enlist this support. This failure of the Congress has not been altogether accidental. It has not been a mistake of omission, but of commission. In spite of the historical fact that it was the spontaneous awakening of the exploited masses that lent potentiality to the national movement led by the Congress, the latter could not help being the political party of the propertied classes. All talk of humanitarianism and the crocodile tears shed over the poverty of the Indian masses could not hide the true social affiliation

of the Congress. It is an obvious fact that whenever a choice had to be made between the rich propertied class and the exploited working masses, even the Mahatma himself did not hesitate to stand by the former.

But if the working-class is historically destined to carry forward the standard of National liberation, it must develop its own organization. Just as in course of time it woke up and assumed a surprisingly fighting mood, inspite of the degrading ignorance inherited through centuries of social servitude, so will it form its class organization suitable for the great historic mission before it. To help the growth of this organization is, therefore, the paramount task of all revolutionary nationalists. The inevitable consequences of the present gigantic social upheaval are apprehended more or less by all the elements whose interests are threatened by this revolutionary development. The rise of the Indian worker, —the awakening of the Indian peasantry, is a factor. It can no longer be ignored; it has to be contended with. Therefore, we find all kinds of people busy in organizing labour. Among the bumper crop of our "labour leaders" are to be found humanitarian religionists, social reformers, pseudo-liberals in the pay of the employing class, briefless barristers, government agents, English labour aristocrats and what not. It is a sheer illusion to think that these self-appointed leaders care any more for the interests of the labouring masses than does the Congress. Nevertheless, at the present moment, the direction of the labour movement is almost exclusively vested in such elements as are no less hostile to the liberation of the working-class than are the British to the freedom of the Indian people. It is so because, on account of its extreme economic and intellectual backwardness, the Indian working-class is not yet in a position to throw up its own class leadership. But the movement is there, threatening the placid self-satisfaction of the capitalists and landlords, native as well as foreign. Our improvised labour leaders are but the gallant defenders, conscious or unconscious, of the propertied rich. So it is quite evident that such leadership will not direct the awakening workers and peasants in the right channel; on the contrary, its object is to prevent it, as long as possible, from assuming that dangerous character it is destined to do eventually. Under this baneful leadership, labour organization in India will be turned into a bulwark of conservative reformism, which no more constitutes a menace to British domination than does the wordy extremism of the bankrupt lower middle-class.

It appears that to the majority of the revolutionary nationalists, the importance of labour organization for the struggle for national freedom is not clear. The first consideration that makes them dismiss the suggestion of intense activity for organizing the working-class, is

the apprehension of disturbing the national unity. They are sincerely afraid of splitting the ranks of the national army. This oversensitiveness is, however, not the result of any studied deliberation, but of their affiliation, at least by birth, with the upper classes. But this fear does not prevent the development of labour organizations, which are a historical phenomenon, and therefore must grow and play their revolutionary role in history, all remonstrances and apprehensions notwithstanding. The solution of the problem before us demands the courage of facing the reality. An issue does not become non-existent by our shunning it.

Given the foremost necessity of working out our national liberation, it is logical that the forces involved in this struggle must be mobilized and consolidated by all means. But this much needed mobilization will never come out of the realm of sincere desire if, in the name of an imaginary unity, the ever growing socio-economic forces are overlooked. All classes of the Indian society are more or less interested in the termination of the foreign domination, which stands in the way of the progress of all of them. But this plain fact has not prevented the "politically minded" upper and middle classes from dividing themselves into the camps of Moderates, Progressives, Non-Cooperators, Extremists and so forth. These elements are educated, intelligent, and thus are supposed to understand our national problem. Nevertheless they are divided. Why? Because there exist shades of difference in their respective material interests. Then, how can we expect that two great divisions of the society, namely the exploiting and exploited, will be united on a programme that only takes into consideration the interests of the former? Here steps in the orthodox nationalist, the protagonist of our spiritual civilization of the West, and tells us, "Don't import into our holy land that pernicious talk about classes: we believe in the spiritual equality of all, and therefore, there is no room for classes in our society". This is not only avoiding an issue thrust upon us, but worst still, it is a brazen defence of rank reaction. But it does not alter the situation; despite all spiritual cant and pious desire, the classes are there and our national movement is determined, consciously or unconsciously, according to the development of them. Had it been otherwise, there would not have arisen a labour movement apart from the Congress or other national organizations. The workers and peasants are expressing the demands of their class through strikes and agrarian revolts. They will form their class organization to back up these demands. And in so far as these demands cannot be fulfilled so long as the country remains under foreign imperialist domination, the workers and peasants will form part of the forces struggling for national liberation. But the mobilization of these forces must be carried on the ground first of all, of their

immediate class interest, which is the driving motive behind their awakening. Hence the supreme importance of the labour organization for the future of the struggle for national liberation.

The unity of the national forces will not be realised by submerging the interests of the exploited majority to that of the rich few at the top. This sort of superficial unity has become untenable by the revolutionary awakening of the toiling masses, which awakening has strengthened immensely the national movement. Therefore it follows logically that the required mobilization of the national army will be achieved through the organization of the labouring class. This paramount task should not be looked upon as detrimental to our national interests, although any growth of revolutionary consciousness on the part of the exploited majority is prejudicial to the continued safety of those who live and prosper on the product of exploited human labour power. Because the goal of revolutionary nationalism is not looking for the aggrandisement of a small section, but of the entire Indian people.

Being of such great importance, the task of organizing labour should not be left in the hands of those, most of whom are only anxious to divert the movement from a revolutionary channel. Destined to play a revolutionary role, the labour organization should be built on revolutionary principles, in consonance with the forces at present throwing the working masses in a state of great ferment. This can be done, not by reformists anxious to perpetuate the present order of class-ridden society by pacifying the rebellious working-masses with palliatives, —but by revolutionaries free from allegiance to the upper classes. If left to the former, the young labour movement will be prevented from developing in a way which will make it the revolutionary vanguard of the army of national liberation. Therefore the task of labour organization should no longer be shirked by all those who want to see our country free within the shortest possible time.

SHALLOW EXTREMISM

A reshuffling of forces is the most outstanding feature of our movement at the present moment. Various social elements, which have been operating together within the folds of the Congress, cannot be held together any longer. The background of social confusion, on which the Non-Cooperation movement was reared, has been undergoing a steady process of clarification, brought about by the development of the economic motives which involved these various classes into a conglomerate movement.

Since the Moderates, representing the upper classes including the landlords, industrial capitalists and rich intellectuals engaged in liberal professions, were lured away by the Reforms, the Congress became the political organ of the middle-class. This was so as a result of the logic of social-economics. The Reforms satisfied, at least temporarily, the ambitions of the upper classes. The most galling of the disabilities imposed upon capitalist development were removed; imperial capital, forced by necessities created in consequence of the world situation, showed an inclination of conceding the Indian investors a place in the sun; accommodation was made for the upper strata of the intellectuals in the higher grade of the public services; and the prospect of more political power was opened before the eyes of the large property-holding class. But none of these Reforms affected in any way the economic position of the middle-class. The prospective aggrandisement of the rich intellectuals did not promise any amelioration to those eking out a miserable existence in the back benches of the bar, or behind the counter of the small trader, or in the ill-paid educational service of the lower grade, or to the thousands and thousands of students with a positively dark future staring them in the face. While the Congress was still under the control of the Moderates, the standard of Extremism was raised by the spokesmen of these lower middle-class elements. On the débacle of the Old Guard, these lower middle-class extremists came to power and imposed upon the Congress their ideology. The Non-Cooperation Movement was actuated by lower middle-class ideals. No revolutionary principle making either for a social readjustment nor even for a radical political change, was to be found in it. In essence it was but the sulking attitude of the dissatisfied, smarting under its own impotency. "The Reforms did not concede anything to us; we will try to obstruct them". Such was the attitude of the lower middle-class, betrayed by the Liberals, and who were the guiding spirit of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

But from the very beginning, there existed two distinct and conflicting social tendencies within the folds of the Non-Cooperation Movement. One was the direct descendant of the Extremists in the old Congress camp and the other was the new incumbent pushed into the political arena by the development of a new revolutionary force, namely the awakening mass energy. By intellectual training, political conviction and social affiliation, the former belonged to the same class as those bought over by the Reforms. Consequently it did not like to go so far away as would make the journey back impossible. Hence the opposition to certain clauses of the Non-Cooperation Resolution when it was first drafted. The latter tendency, which was in ascendancy in the heyday of the non-cooperation campaign,

expressed the real lower middle-class outlook on life. Not having a conviction of its own, it was driven from pillar to post. Its political programme was on the whole non-existent, and the rudimentary shreds of it to be found here and there, were conspicuous for indecision and vagueness. Closely connected with the village, it was conservative in its economic aspect. In every way it lived in the dead past, oblivious of the revolutionary upheaval all around.

Two elements of such a conflicting nature cannot go hand in hand very far. The Extremism of the former was political radicalism actuated by modern ideals. The Nationalism of the latter, on the contrary, is decidedly reactionary, fed upon old religious concepts. The only thing common to both is the abhorrence to revolutionary development. The former is too timid, too limited in its outlook, in short, too bourgeois to court anything revolutionary; while the latter is decidedly anti-revolutionary, because it stands on a social foundation which will be made untenable by a revolution. A negative ideal is not binding for ever. The break has occurred.

A duel is going on between the two forces: one representing the progressive tendencies in the upper middle-class, the other embodying the lower strata of the same social class steeped in religious prejudices, economic conservatism, intellectual bankruptcy and a spirit of reaction in general. This duel is fought over the leadership of the Congress. The latter dominated the political movement during the last two years because, in spite of itself, it rode on the rising tide of mass revolt. In its attempt to stir up reactionary nationalism of a religious brand, it called in the forces of mass-revolt, which powerful factor of social dynamics lent it temporarily a very imposing appearance. The former, that is the progressive strata of the middle-class, threw in its lot with this movement, because there was no other place for it. On the one hand, the Reforms excluded it; on the other, the political movement was dominated by the reactionaries. The space in the centre was narrowed down to an insignificant and negligible factor. It was not enviable to stand there. Hence the alliance of the two such incompatible forces.

But, as was to be expected, the reactionary nationalism of the lower middle-class has succumbed in the fierce clash of revolution and reaction. To-day it is practically swept off the board of the political movement. It attracted the attention of the world and the adhesion of the "pragmatic politicians" of the upper middle-class by virtue of the fact that it was riding on the high horse of Revolution. It did not make any difference that it committed the crime unwittingly. But the time came when it grew horrified at the indecent scene and tried to pull in the horse running at break-neck speed. The result was disastrous for one and deplorable for the other. It was disastrous

for the rider, who was thrown of the majestic saddle down the precipice of obscurity; while the sudden frantic cry for halt dazed and puzzled the horse, which as it were, fell into a torpor after the first wild dash, and to-day runs the risk of being harnessed in the gilded chains of an orderly and constitutional movement, to be driven along the respectable road of Reformism.

This is a temporary setback for the revolutionary forces, which could be so easily dissipated because their subjective counterpart has not developed as yet, thus leaving them at the mercy of opportunist leadership. It is temporary, but none the less deplorable. Now begins a new act of the drama, with the pragmatic politicians of the Extremist school occupying the centre of the stage. Will they make a better show? Certainly not. Middle-class Extremism does not go very far, because it is divorced from the dynamics of revolutionary mass-energy. If the religious nationalists misled and betrayed the masses with reactionary pacifism, the middle-class Extremists are sublimely indifferent to them. They count more upon statics than upon dynamics. Hence the collapse of this type of Extremism is a foregone conclusion. In fact it is already collapsing. A movement started in opposition to certain tactics which meant an all round retreat, cannot be relied upon for anything spectacular, when all it can promise to do is to execute the self-same retreat in an orderly manner.

It is evident that the opposition led by the Mahratta Party is not in any way inclined towards revolutionary tactics in the place of those of indecision and hesitancy. The Congress programme as formulated at Bardoli and ratified at Delhi is to be revised. This is the demand. But what will be the new programme? The suggestions in this respect are altogether negative. Certain clauses, those opposed by the upper middle-class leaders at Nagpur, are to be given up as impractical. Some go so far as to repudiate the whole theory of Non-Cooperation, and adopt the curious doctrine of "Responsive Cooperation" in its stead. In order to make it somewhat distinguishable from the programme of the Liberal Party, it is often called "Responsive Non-Cooperation" which is still more curious, because it does not mean anything. There is some sense in the theory that we will cooperate with the government under conditions; that is, we will respond to every act of concession by our cooperation. But Non-Cooperation can never be "responsive"; it can only be retaliatory. This is but word-mongering to conceal the real motive, which is to abandon Non-Cooperation in so far as it affects the upper middle-class.

Such is the way of middle-class Extremism. It is a misnomer, because it always avoids going to the extreme. To stand in the centre is its habit. On the one hand, the doors of the Kingdom of Heaven, where the upper classes are admitted by the courtesy of the

imperial ruler, are closed to it; on the other hand, belonging to the propertied classes, it is opposed to going all the way over to the revolutionary masses. Had the present opposition been any more revolutionary than the leadership which it aspires to replace, it would step in where the latter failed. If the Bardoli Programme is to be revised, it should be done, not in order to go back upon all the activities whose inevitable consequences forced the religious nationalists to show their reactionary colour, but in order to intensify those activities which were stopped by that silly edict called the "Constructive Programme". The Bardoli Resolutions were not forced upon the Congress as a natural consequence of the so-called impracticability of the Non-Cooperation Programme; they were adopted by a terrified, bewildered and reactionary leadership, unwilling to proceed on the road of revolution, following the logical consequences of a movement much bigger than itself. The errors of Bardoli will not be rectified by the lawyers resuming their practice, nor by entering the Councils on the principle of "responsive cooperation". The errors of Bardoli can only be rectified by casting aside the so-called Constructive Programme as a counter-revolutionary document, and declaring a militant programme of action in its place. The middle-class Extremists have not the least intention of doing so. They want to have the gratification of affixing M. L. C.'s to their names. But they are against lifting the pernicious bans declared from Bardoli, the bans put upon mass-action, the edict prohibiting the hungry and exploited workers and peasants the right to rise in revolt. But let them not forget that they followed on the heels of the orthodox Non-cooperation leaders so long as the latter held control of the masses. To-day they are wisely criticising the methods of Non-cooperation, because it has become impotent by cutting itself asunder from the dynamics of mass-upheaval. But neither the talks of practical politics nor the outbursts of vapoury Extremism will avail unless the new leadership boldly repudiates the reactionary character of the Non-Cooperation Movement and steps in where it so miserably failed. But the middle-class Centrists are utterly incapable of taking such a revolutionary step, their wordy Extremism notwithstanding.

So, will the struggle for national liberation remain stuck in the morass of reaction, impotency and hesitation? No. The days of reactionary religious nationalism are gone. The Centrist Extremism of the middle-class has collapsed before it is born. The leadership of the future is left for those ardent and courageous revolutionaries who will undertake the task of organizing the Mass Party—the political party of the Workers and Peasants, the only social element objectively revolutionary and whose interests can never be protected by half-way measures of reform and compromise.

NEW LEADERSHIP

The Liberals representing the propertied upper classes and rich intellectuals, went over to the side of the foreign ruler as soon as the latter showed the inclination to pay adequately for their services. The Constitutional Democracy of the Liberals thus ended in compromise, and betrayal of the national movement. The Extremists, spokesmen of the middle-classes, inaugurated the campaign of Non-cooperation as a protest against this act of the Moderates. But if the politics of the Moderate-Liberals ended in compromise, that of the Extremist Non-cooperators have landed the movement on the quagmire of intellectual bankruptcy and sentimental degeneration.

Today the National Congress as a political organization is dead. Its corpse waits either to be buried or resurrected by a new breath of life. From the orthodox non-cooperators nothing better than a ceremonial burial of the Congress can be expected, because the non-cooperators have only succeeded in demonstrating their inability and unwillingness to adopt such methods of non-cooperation as will push our movement forward. In the hand of our present leaders Non-cooperation has degenerated from a potential political weapon to a lifeless metaphysical abstraction.

The stampede of the pragmatic politicians towards the camp of the Moderates threatens to leave the Congress without leadership. The country has been eagerly waiting for Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das to come out of jail and take in his hand the reins of the movement. This faith of the non-cooperators in Mr. Das has been demonstrated by his unanimous election to the presidency of the forthcoming annual session of the National Congress. But one cannot but be sorely disappointed with the leadership of Mr. Das if his utterances since he came out of prison are to be taken as indicative of his future action. In vain did we listen to his eloquent speech in answer to the address of the people of Calcutta, for some practical guidance to the floundering ship of non-cooperation. He expressed noble and beautiful sentiments which, however, only succeeded in making the confusion reigning in our movement since the beginning of the year, worse confounded. He would not have a Swaraj which was not based on Truth, the nature of which, however, he did not define. But we are given to understand very clearly that this Kingdom of Heaven is to be reached, not through the dirty thoroughfares of politics, economics and social sciences, things branded by the foremost leader of our movement as purely Western inventions. He would have the people of India shun these unholy material things if they are to follow him to the Swaraj of Truth. Can there be anything more deplorable, nay pitiable, for a people involved in a great struggle for

political liberation, to be thrown to the mercy of such leadership? Does it not prove conclusively that if the Moderates deserted the congress, the Non-cooperators have killed it? The National Congress signifies to us the vanguard of our national forces fighting for political liberation of the Indian people.

Mr. Das will not have anything but truth as the basis of Swaraj. Very good. We do not know what he means by truth. Is it an abstract conception of the *thing in itself* or *pure reason*? He has not explained it. All the allegorical jewels he fished out of the depths of the Mahavarata did not throw any light on the question. He claimed that from time immemorial, India had been the standard-bearer of Truth. Now, India is neither a geographical expression nor an abstract conception. India is composed of Indians. And the existence of a human community is not an abstract phenomenon: it is a concrete reality. The Truth, which, according to Mr. Das and his school, is supposed to be embodied in Indian nationalism, must therefore depend upon the material existence of its standard-bearer, that is, the people of India. And a material existence is maintained by material means. You cannot feed a nation on moonshine.

But what has Mr. Das to say about the material existence of the Indian people? He knows of the grinding poverty that is eating into their very vitals. But he laughs at those who think that this poverty can be cured by economic means. The idea of the economic development of the Indian people moves our foremost leader to laughter. *The pure idealism* of the Deshbandhu leaves the thoughts of the flesh alone and goes on soaring in the heights of mythological allegories. Meanwhile the people, whom he is to lead, toil and starve. This is what the Non-cooperation movement has degenerated into.

The utterances of Mr. Das typify the state of confusion and bankruptcy in which our present leadership has landed. Why is it so? Because the orthodox non-cooperators, who are determined to bury the Congress in the abyss of doctrinarian pacifism and metaphysical aberration, stand on an equivocal social background. The Congress has ceased to voice the aspirations of any conscious social class, much less does it stand for the real interest of the nation. The middle classes, which assumed the leadership of the Congress on the débacle of the Liberals, lack the courage and determination to proceed along revolutionary channels. Therefore they have lost all organic connection with the dynamic forces of mass action which added grandeur and potentiality to the Non-cooperation movement in its first stages. Divorced from the revolutionary mass energy, the middle class leaders of the Non-cooperating Congress stand today in their true character as pillars of reaction. To the right lies the road of social progressiveness, dominated by the upper classes organized in the political

party of Constitutional Democracy,—the Liberal League. To the left is the high road of revolution, the venturesome journey on which can only be undertaken by a revolutionary party of the masses. Unwilling to tread either of these paths, the orthodox non-cooperator can only take refuge in spiritual moralizings which smack of reaction.

We hear Mr. Das utter only one sentence which contains any constructive suggestion. He advises us to organize the villages, leaving the towns alone. He exclaims: "the village first, the town afterwards". And what is the essence of this suggestion? A desire to push the nation back into the village, which is the stronghold of reaction, social and economic. The town is the centre of the progressive forces. The lower middle class with its reactionary social philosophy, cannot bid for the leadership of the progressive forces generated by the higher means of production in the urban areas. There the political leadership is contested by the capitalist bourgeoisie on the one hand and the revolutionary proletariat on the other. Neither the capitalist upper class nor the exploited wage-earner can be expected to listen to the voice of social reaction, which is doomed to destruction in the fierce clash of class struggle. All the heritage of spiritual civilization held so precious by the orthodox non-cooperator, is detrimental to the development of the bourgeoisie, which demands the dissolution of the old patriarchal and feudal economy with its root in the village community and caste guilds. Capitalist development requires large masses of wage-earners free to sell their labour-power. These masses of free labourers cannot be accumulated within the reach of capitalist exploitation without undermining the village. On the other hand, the masses of wage-slaves concentrated in towns and industrial centres are freed from the bondage of religious prejudice and social conservatism by the pressure of economic necessity. Therefore, neither of these two classes concentrated in the town, can be expected to stick to the old social customs and traditions, which become an impediment to their progress and welfare in the course of industrial evolution. The capitalist making huge profits out of industrial enterprises cannot be induced to go back to the antiquated means of production, nor can the expropriated wage-slave be permanently convinced of the virtues of non-violence and spiritual uplift. Therefore the Congress leaders are forced to retire to the village, where the forces of reaction are still living. They think that so long as the social status quo of the village is preserved their political influence will remain intact.

But even the village is no longer immune from the forces of revolution. The revolt of the exploited and expropriated peasantry is shocking the very foundation of rural life, whose economic aspect, in so far as the craft guilds are concerned, is also being fast under-

mined by the growth of machine industry in the towns. So even in the village the leadership of the congress party will not be able to rise to the requirement. There too is needed a revolutionary guidance, which is not to be expected from the conservative and hesitating middle-class.

The progressive bourgeoisie, politically represented by the Liberal League, has gone over to the government because their economic interest is best protected by this move. The National Congress embracing the middle classes is on the eve of a split. The upper strata is going back to the fold of the Liberals. Even if they do not say so, the logical consequence of their deed will not be anything else. The lower middle class stick doggedly to the formula of non-violent non-cooperation, which has lost all political character. None of these represent, nor can represent, the only revolutionary element of the society, which is the exploited workers and expropriated peasantry. As shown above, the cry "*back to the village*" raised by the lower middle class is essentially reactionary in character. It is not meant for any revolutionary action. On the contrary, it is an impotent attempt to stay the majestic march of social forces.

The first, that is the landowning class, big capitalists and rich intellectuals, has forfeited all claims to national leadership by its policy of compromise. It cannot do otherwise, because its interests are too intimately intermixed with those of the foreign ruler. The upper middle-class will keep on pronouncing formidable phrases in order to maintain a pretense of distinction between themselves and the Liberals. But their true demand will never go so far as to embrace a radical change in the existing political and economic structure. They will develop into a full-fledged democratic party, whose programme will advocate such economic readjustment as will give their class a place in the sun. In plain language, wider measures of self-government will transform these stalwarts of Extremism into ardent advocates of orderly progress as their Irish prototypes are doing. The position of the lower middle class is the most pitiable of all. Innate reactionary tendencies will always prevent it from making common cause with the progressive bourgeois liberals; besides, no amount of economic readjustment possible and permissible under the capitalist system, will hold out any substantial amelioration of its bankrupt material condition. On the other hand, it will never have the courage to advocate a revolutionary change of the social system, because any such change will sweep away all those religious and social prejudices cherished by it. Therefore it is clear that the struggle for national liberation cannot be led by any of these elements. In fact, each of them has had its turn, has contributed willingly or unwillingly its respective quota to the struggle, and at last has demonstrated its reluctance or incapability

to go farther. So the time has arrived for the rise of a party of the workers and peasants, the only element essentially revolutionary and not bound down by any property interest.

The leadership of the national struggle must be taken over by a mass party consciously representing the interests, immediate as well as ultimate, of the workers and peasants. The growth of such a party will again breath vigour in the Congress organization, which is lying prostrate today. By mobilizing the revolutionary energy of the toiling masses in battle array, this party will strengthen the position of the middle-class democrats and push them onward in their struggle against the foreign ruler. The capitalist upper class is decidedly hostile to a revolutionary awakening of the working class, and the middle class is too timid, too hesitating to actively court such an awakening. The action of the Congress in the last year has shown it. Therefore what is wanted at the present crisis is a political party of the masses based on the principle of class interest and with a programme advocating mass-action for carrying forward the struggle for national liberation.

MASS ACTION

The first step towards the real freedom of the Indian people is the overthrow of foreign domination. This step cannot be taken successfully without the active support of the working-class. The Non-cooperation that can paralyze the government depends on the action of the masses, who constitute the productive element of the society. Therefore, first of all we must organize the workers and peasants in militant class organizations. This task has to be undertaken by the workers and peasants themselves. They must have their own leaders conscious of their class interests.

It is true that the British domination in India is maintained by the Indians themselves; and therefore, as soon as the Indians refuse to lend their support to it, the foreign government will fall to pieces. But it is necessary to understand on what class the British domination is essentially based, because if we want to undermine a structure, we must first of all discover the foundation. The foundation of British domination is the exploitation of the Indian masses. Why do the British rule India? Why are they so determined to maintain their supremacy at all cost? Because they derive a great profit from exploiting the Indian masses. The profit that the British make out of their domination in India is not produced by the lawyers, doctors, teachers, or students. It is made out of the labour of the workers and peasants. True and effective Non-cooperation will be that which

cuts into this source of profit. That is, if the workers and peasants refuse to produce so that the foreign ruler can make huge profits, the existence of the latter will be in danger.

Now let us see whose support and co-operation is really essential for the existence of the British government. There cannot be any doubt that the British rule India in order that the British capitalist class can make large profits by exploiting the natural resources and labour power of the country. Our upper classes are hostile to the British only to the extent that the latter want to monopolize the right of exploitation. The foreigner cannot carry on this exploitation without the support of a certain section of the native population. To this extent, foreign domination is dependent upon the native upper classes. But the actual amount of profit made by the British is not produced by the native upper and middle classes; it is produced by the workers and peasants. So it is only the latter that can cut into the basis of British domination by refusing to produce value for the British capitalist.

The native capitalist class does not produce anything that swells the pocket of the British rulers. On the contrary, it participates in the total amount of wealth produced by the Indian workers and peasants. For example the landlords do not contribute anything whatsoever to the coffers of the foreign ruler; on the contrary, they eat up a considerable part of the wealth produced by the peasants. This part would be also appropriated by the British capitalist, if there were no Indian landlords. The same thing applies to the merchants and manufacturers, whose co-operation costs the British a portion of the total profit made by exploiting the country and the people. Neither do the intellectuals, —the lawyers, doctors, professors, officials, clerics etc.—produce anything. What they do is to help the British government exploit the people. This position makes them more dependent upon the British than the latter on them. Therefore it is idle to expect that these elements, —the landlords, merchants, manufacturers, intellectuals and students, —collectively and severally are capable of paralyzing the government by means of non-cooperation. Some of them are not in a position to non-cooperate, because they lose by such non-cooperation; and the non-cooperation of the others alone is not enough to paralyze the government, which rests on a deeper foundation.

If the lawyers boycott the courts, they are the losers; the government does not lose anything. It is the same with the teachers and students. The experience of the last two years has amply proved it. The boycott of British goods, if carried to any appreciable degree of success, will affect the government by hitting the English textile industry; but, first of all, this boycott cannot be successful without the

support of the Indian masses, and secondly its success will benefit the Indian capitalist class and not the workers and peasants. So it is clear that the non-cooperation which can seriously injure the position of the foreign ruler and eventually overthrow him has to be based on a much wider foundation than the boycott of Councils, courts, schools and even of British goods. *It must be based on the refusal of the producing class to produce profit for the British capitalist.* In other words, Non-cooperation can be made effective only by the revolutionary action of the workers and peasants by means of mass strikes, led by the class conscious vanguard on the principle of class struggle and for the interests of the producing class.

To prepare for this sweeping mass action, to mobilize the forces with a view to deal deadly blows to the government by means of mass strikes, is the task of all those who want to lead the movement for national liberation forward. The Congress leaders also declare their intention to prepare an atmosphere suitable for Civil Disobedience; but the way by which they expect to do it is mistaken. And we have every reason to believe that this is a wilful mistake. Our leaders do not want to follow the course of revolutionary action. Otherwise how can we explain the policy of stopping all revolutionary activities, just at the time when the masses demonstrated in repeated instances their readiness to follow the lead of the Congress? Now our leaders decry any suggestion of mass action on the ground that the country is not ready for it. And they have given us the *Charka* and *Khaddar* to play with. But these are not the means by which the subsiding mass enthusiasm can be kept up and the people led into action.

If we seriously intend to inaugurate a campaign of Mass Civil Disobedience (the only potent weapon available under the present circumstances) at the earliest opportunity, it is necessary at once to clarify our idea about this step. It is evident from all appearances, that the Congress leaders entertain a very limited view of the question. If they ever go to the extent of declaring Civil Disobedience, they will do so as a legal issue. It will be a call to disobey certain legislation. But this will not be the Civil Disobedience which can paralyze the government. We must learn from experience. Non-cooperation failed to realize its end because it was not applied on a comprehensive scale. The same mistake should not be again committed. The widest possible masses of the population must be involved in the campaign of Civil Disobedience, if it is to attain its object, namely, to paralyze the government. In other words, Civil Disobedience should not be Passive Resistance to certain laws held to be "unjust" by the Congress leaders, but a *militant action of the masses*. If it is the first that the Congress is working

for, then it will have to keep on working till eternity, because a suitable atmosphere for it will never be created. You cannot tune up the whole nation to a mood of martyrdom. But the objective conditions are ready if Civil Disobedience is to follow the second course, —that of mass action.

Eighty percent of our people are in such a condition that it hardly can be worse. Signs are not lacking that their traditional patience has reached the point of exhaustion. Consequently, it is sure that any struggle begun with the expressed purpose of improving the present unbearable life of the workers and peasants masses will enlist their support. This being the case, the slogan of Civil Disobedience will be caught up by the masses of the people, if it is launched as a call to rebel against their intolerable condition of life. It is very well known how ready are the workers to strike on any conceivable pretext. Why? They do not strike simply for fancy; but because their patience is exhausted and they are ready to fight for a better life. The same is the case with the peasant masses, who are only too eager to catch at any call for non-payment of rents and taxes. This has been more than amply demonstrated during the last two years.

So it is clear that the masses of our people are ready for action; what is lacking is a leadership free from class limitations and inspired with a revolutionary vision. The future development of our movement depends upon the appearance of a party endowed with this much-needed leadership, which will know how the economic struggle of the workers and peasants can be organized so as to develop it into a revolutionary political fight. Let us not forget that a fairly well-organized and sustained strike in any of the great industries inflicts more harm on the government and capitalist class behind it than all the effects of the Triple Boycott taken together. By leading the workers in such local strikes, the revolutionary mass party will win their confidence and thus steadily advance, preparing the ground for one or a series of great country-wide strikes which will be the best and most effective form of Civil Disobedience.

The work among the city proletariat and the peasants must go hand in hand. Our activities in the village should be equally revolutionary. We will work not to teach the exploited tenant self-help, but self-assertion. No amount of reformist activities can ameliorate the bankrupt position of our peasantry. Nothing less than a radical change will do. Therefore we must work in that direction. Our object will be to *create discontent everywhere against the present system, and intensify it wherever it exists*. And mass strikes and demonstrations should be organized at every available opportunity to give vent to this growing discontent. We should not expect that every strike will

end in a victory for the workers; that every demand of the peasantry will be granted by the government or landlord. There will be defeats in so far as the economic aspects of the struggle are concerned, but every strike, every demonstration, will awaken the consciousness of the masses, will develop their revolutionary determination. This is the only way of creating an atmosphere suitable for Civil Disobedience. But it can be done only by a party of the masses, —a party that will stand for the interests of the toiling masses and will provide them with that revolutionary leadership which will be steeled in the every day fight and which will not stop till the final victory is won.

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